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FRANCIS J. HALL
Rev. for the Living Church June 18

THE DIVINITY OF JESUS CHRIST

AN EXPOSITION OF THE ORIGIN AND REASONABLENESS OF THE BELIEF OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

BY THE AUTHORS OF

"PROGRESSIVE ORTHODOXY"

PROFESSORS IN ANDOVER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

And the Life was manifested, and we have seen and bear witness, and declare unto you the Life, the Eternal Life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us. — 1 John i. 2

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The papers collected in this volume appeared recently as editorial contributions to "The Andover Review," a religious and theological periodical conducted by Egbert C. Smyth, William Jewett Tucker, J. W. Churchill, George Harris, and Edward Y. Hincks, Professors in Andover Theological Seminary. They are republished substantially as first issued. Some account of the reasons for presenting them is given in the introductory chapter.

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THE

DIVINITY OF JESUS CHRIST

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

MANY thoughtful persons at the present time are unusually attracted to questions concerning the Divinity of Christ. In some instances this interest connects directly and consciously with a strenuous endeavor to obtain settled and satisfactory personal convictions respecting religious truth and duty. In others it has arisen more quietly and unconsciously. They find themselves inquiring, questioning, perhaps doubting, and increasingly perplexed.

There are many causes for this unrest. A new method of dealing with Sacred Scripture has come into vogue. Its several books are studied in their historical origin and character.

Attention is turned to the limitations of revelation in its successive stages, limitations implicit in the fact always recognized that this revelation has been progressive, but never before so sharply defined and strongly emphasized. The doctrinal significance, still more the evidential cogency, of many familiar proof-texts is seen to be greatly modified, if not destroyed. Scientific methods are now primarily inductive, theological construction hitherto has been predominantly deductive. The dogmas of the coessentiality of the Son with the Father, and of the two natures in one person, arose, it is maintained, through a commingling of philosophies now superseded with an imperfect historical knowledge of the Scriptures. At the least, the forms of thought they employ are believed to be outworn, and they certainly are not those which now would most naturally arise, and most aptly and spontaneously express men's thoughts of God and of Christ. A strong, sometimes an almost painful, longing is manifested for more simple, real, living apprehensions of the Jesus to whom

his disciples brought their difficulties and their joys, and from whom they learned of the Father. There is more than a vague suspicion, there is in many quarters a quite pronounced accusation, that the ordinary dogmas conceal rather than make perspicuous the truth about Christ. So far as our observation goes, this discontent does not signify any conscious tendency to the Unitarian position. The divinity of Christ is acknowledged, even when phrases in which this truth has been long enshrined are discarded. The difference between most of those we have in mind and their religious predecessors for many a generation is in general this : the latter had a definite and assured conception of what Christ's divinity means, the former have not. Some regard such a conception and conviction as wholly unattainable. We know Christ with certainty, it is said, only in experiences which we can verify as historical, not merely as to the fact of their occurrence, but in their contents and character. We know nothing in this way respecting his preëxistent state, and

cannot control anything told us about it by any available tests. We can learn something of his earthly life and of his character, and we can be taught by him how to live worthily. There is evidence that he survived death. No other earthly life has seemed to be so associated with the divine, to teach so much of God, but of its present activities and personal relation to our lives we cannot make positive affirmations. With others this somewhat negative, or at least indeterminate, conclusion as to Christ's divinity springs from critical difficulties respecting the sources of evidence. Contemporary testimony, it is claimed, is preserved almost entirely in the Synoptical Gospels, and there is found to be mingled with later additions. These Gospels fail, it is thought, to make clear that Jesus ever himself claimed to be truly divine, and they show in various ways that his disciples did not so regard him. The usual proofs derived from other books of the New Testament are likewise deemed inconclusive, either exegetically or for lack of authority. Even if Paul

or John, in canonical writings attributed to them, recognize the divinity of Christ, and it is generally admitted that they do, there are still to be met two uncertainties respecting this testimony, — its genuineness and its divine assurance. We are not sure, for instance, that Paul wrote Colossians, and if he did, we are not certain that he gives us more than the result of his own reasoning upon facts otherwise known to us, and upon which we can reflect for ourselves. Large allowance, it is further suggested, must be made for tendencies in an uncritical and unscientific age to give a supernatural explanation of remarkable phenomena, to deify heroes, to put mystical and speculative interpretations upon ancient Scriptures.

Others are embarrassed by the baffling mystery presented in the theological conception of Christ. The church has never yet pronounced upon the unity of Christ's person, beyond affirming the fact, though some hints have been dropped as it were incidentally. It has, however, affirmed that there are two

complete and perfect natures, even to the coexistence of two wills, the divine and the human. The modern psychology finds in such a premise the conclusion that there are two persons, which the church and theology and Scripture deny. It is reasonable to accept a mystery upon evidence; it is impossible to believe in a contradiction. We do not concede that the ordinary doctrine contains a contradiction, but only that it is imperfect, yet its ancient form naturally does suggest to those trained under present modes of thinking something difficult of apprehension even as a mystery.

More important still is the influence of the modern appreciation of Christ in his true and real humanity. This has always been maintained as a part of the church doctrine of Christ. But the ancient and mediæval Christology, as it developed into dogma, tended to make the personality of the Redeemer wholly divine, and the humanity unreal. A reaction from this appears in a modern tendency to make the personality human and the divinity

shadowy. Is it not possible to gain a completer view of the person of our Lord? Do not the facts require a statement more comprehensive and at the same time more apprehensible and practical? Many are asking this question, many who are deeply impressed with the historical evidence of Christ's true humanity, and yet are not ready to credit even such humanity with strictly divine perfections, nor to claim that it adequately accounts for the life-giving power of his person. In such minds the question is definitely reached, What are we to think of Christ as respects his real personality? and the approach to this question is thought to be through his humanity, or at least the attested facts of his earthly life, rather than by the way of inference from later statements respecting his preëxistence and eternal Sonship.

There seems to be occasion in these and other signs of the times for a new consideration of the subject of the true divinity of Christ in the light of recent critical studies. In the faith of the church it is a fundamen-

tal article, — something without which Christianity ceases to be what it purports to be, something apart from which its fruits cannot long be gathered. Reinvestigated it may be, for no generation can take up fully into its thought any vital truth in a merely traditional way. Set in new relations and seen in new lights it may well be, for the work of the church goes on under ever-changing conditions. Disputes may be settled, controversies closed, particular inquiries concluded, dogmas reached which mark boundaries and attest what has been gained, but man's conception either of God or of himself is never a fixed quantity, nor perfect in quality, and the central mystery of our faith combines in itself all the treasures and all the perplexities of divinity and humanity in their distinctness and their union. Their treasures incite to thought, their perplexities admonish to humility. We have left, however, almost or quite unnoticed theoretic or speculative questions that arise in the endeavor to construct a theological dogma respecting the person of

Christ. Our object is more primary and practical. We desire, if we may, to help those who, from the causes we have noticed, are more or less embarrassed, or troubled in their Christian faith. Nearly eight years ago we found a similar practical call for an application of a great principle of Christianity, that of its universality, to various doctrinal and missionary problems of the day. The papers thus elicited were afterwards gathered together in a little volume entitled "Progressive Orthodoxy." In it the opinion was expressed that the question which "lies nearest the heart of all modern Christian thought and life is, . . . 'Is the Jesus whose life we know on its human side the Christ in whom religious faith finds its appropriate and permanently satisfying object?'" and we added as expressive of our own conviction, "The Jesus of history is the Christ of faith; the Christ of faith is God revealed and known." The chapters which follow will deal especially with the question thus proposed.

CHAPTER II.

THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH.

Did the primitive church believe Jesus Christ to be a divine being? Inquiry as to his divinity naturally begins with this question. The first Christians were personally associated with Jesus; some of them lived in intimacy with him. Their impressions of him, therefore, are an historical source of knowledge of him second only to his assertions about himself. Moreover, their belief about Christ, obviously a very important article of their religious faith, is a means of finding out whether the church doctrine that Christ is divine is a part of Christianity, and is entitled to the respectful consideration which Christianity has earned by its influence on men. If at the very beginning of its life the church held Jesus Christ to be divine, and considered the doctrine of his divineness to be a part of the

gift of truth it had received from God and accredited by its religious experience, the doctrine holds presumptive truth for those who believe that the Christian life is rooted in God.

If it were proved that the primitive church did not hold that Christ was divine, that this belief came into the mind of Christendom, say, in the third century, then it might be urged that the doctrine did not belong to the essence of Christianity, inasmuch as Christianity had existed in its full strength without having it. At any rate, whatever other claims it might bring, it could not present this one, of having always belonged to the faith which overcame the world, of having belonged to that faith in its beginning, when it was distinctly conscious of the elements constituting its life. But if the contrary be proved, those who would set aside the doctrine must face the question, How could a gross delusion bear fruit in such living as that of the apostolic church?

Did the primitive church believe Jesus

Christ to be a divine being? We seek an answer to the question in the writings of the apostles. They were the voice of the church. Its faith and life found clearest and fullest expression through them. Their letters, written to instruct and guide it, put the truth in which and by which it lived into simple form, adapted to immediate spiritual need. The artlessness and the practical nature of these writings make them more adequate evidence of the contents of the religious consciousness of their writers and readers than elaborate treatises would be.

We begin with the letters of the Apostle Paul, because they were earliest in time and of fullest content. Does any one object to counting this apostle among the witnesses to the belief of primitive Christianity on the ground that he was not one of the disciples of Jesus, and was not converted until several years after the church was established? Is it suggested that as he received his first ideas of Christianity in a special way, they may have been peculiar ideas? It is said in confirma-

tion of this suggestion that we find some evidence in the oldest of church histories that Paul did not agree with the estimate of the original apostles as to what constitutes Christianity. The answer is, Paul worked in fellowship with the original apostles; he acknowledged their tradition of Jesus to be true and authoritative, and lent his own authority to it; he incorporated much of that tradition into his teaching; he spoke of the original apostles with honor, not only as witnesses of Christ's resurrection, but as Christian laborers;[1] he did not in any of his letters criticise their teaching in any point, and the Acts does not contain evidence that he even differed from them about the requirements proper to be imposed on Gentile converts. It is altogether unlikely, therefore, that he held a different view of the common Master; that he gave Jesus an honor which those who had lived with him, and treasured up his words, and seen him, as they believed, after he rose from the dead, could not concede. Moreover,

[1] 1 Cor. ix. 5; xii. 28; xv. 7.

the writings of the earlier apostles show, as we shall presently see, that their thought of Jesus agreed with that of the apostle to the Gentiles.

Paul believed that a true religious faith, one that brought men into right relations to God, and produced good character, had Jesus Christ as its central object. The gospel which he carried to men, and commended to them with agony of earnestness, was the gospel of Christ, that is, about Christ. "Him we preach," he said, describing his life-work. That work was a personal one. Paul carried his gospel to every man he could reach, because he believed that every man's welfare depended absolutely on his having and using it. Only by believing on Jesus Christ could any man come into right relation to God and possess true manhood.

All this is commonplace to those who are familiar with the Pauline letters. It is equally obvious to them that the supreme significance which Paul believed Jesus Christ to possess belonged to him in his present invisible and heavenly life. It was not because Christ in

his earthly life had revealed certain sublime truths, but because in his risen life, unseen by men, yet in living intercourse with them, he was all-important, that believing on him was the one way to true well-being.

Faith in him united to him. To Paul, the believer is *ipso facto* Christ's servant. He lives unto Christ. He also lives *with* his Master. He is, as it were, encompassed by this invisible person, to whom he is wedded by a union closer than that which joins husband and wife; he is "in Christ."

The appreciation of Jesus Christ, which to Paul is all-essential, means more than appreciating the quality of his earthly life; it means knowing the significance of his being, the nature he bears, the position he holds in the universe. This is evident from the reason alleged for the importance of appreciating the event in his career in which his character most plainly appears, — the crucifixion. Christ crucified is the power of God and the wisdom of God. The death of Jesus reveals God as does no other event in history, because it is a

power to reconcile man to him. He whose death has this value is separate from all others. "Herein God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." The significance of the death rests upon the value of the life offered in sacrifice. This, too, lies on the surface of the letters of Paul.

Whom did the apostle believe this person whom he preached to be? — this person who after death had immediate relations with men; this person, into living union with whom all men might enter, to have union with whom was to be united to God and to have holy character? Paul believed that Christ's existence did not begin with his earthly life. He told the Philippians[1] that Christ's earthly life expressed his condescending love, inasmuch as he, when existing in the divine form, emptied himself, taking upon him the form of a slave, and being found in fashion as a man. The Philippian letter was written several years after Paul's more elaborate doctrinal epistles;

[1] Phil. ii. 5–8.

but this fact gives no reason for suspecting that his belief in the preëxistence of Jesus grew up in his mind after the latter were written. For he said to the Corinthians:[1] "The second man is of heaven." It seems only just to give these words the interpretation suggested by the Philippian passage, and to make them teach that Christ lived in heaven before he lived on earth. This is, indeed, their obvious meaning, and the meaning which the apostle's thought requires. "The new mankind has as its prototype, not the man of earthly but the man of heavenly origin." If Jesus had a heavenly origin, he came here from heaven; that is, left a heavenly for an earthly life. Paul says what is equivalent to this in telling the Corinthians:[2] "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, although he was rich, yet on your account he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich." Jesus never had earthly riches. The words are naturally interpreted only when under-

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 47. [2] 2 Cor. viii. 9.

stood as referring to an act of self-renouncing love preceding and coextensive with his earthly life. Paul wrote to the Galatians:[1] "When the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that he might redeem those under the law," etc. We believe that preexistence is here ascribed to Christ. The sending forth spoken of seems to be sending into the world from heaven. This is suggested by the words "born of a woman." This affirmation made about any other man would be meaningless. The words,[2] "God in sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh," also seems to affirm by implication the preexistence of Christ.

What kind of a being did Paul believe the preëxistent Christ to be? Did he think him to be an angel? We find no evidence of such a belief in the apostle's letters. True, he believed in the existence of angels; but they seem to have had an inconspicuous place in

[1] Gal. iv. 4. [2] Rom. viii. 3.

his theology. He does not often allude to them. They never are mentioned when he is showing how men's great religious needs may be met. There is nothing in Paul's letters suggesting that he thought any angel could render men such service as he attributes to Jesus Christ. Indeed, his theology gives reason for believing that he could not have attributed an angelic nature to Christ. For he says that Jesus was the second man; the founder of a new mankind; and believes his significance for man to be due to the fact that he is the one man in whom our race finds its natural head and representative. But would an angelic nature, one of another created order, have fitted him to be the representative man, the most human of all men, the one who perfectly expresses God's idea of man?

The presumption drawn from Paul's theology is confirmed by the language which he uses of the preëxistent Christ. He seems to imply that he was a being other than angelic, one not included among created beings, a divine

being. Paul taught this in telling the Philippians, in the passage which we have already quoted, that Jesus Christ was in the form of God before he wore the form of a slave, being found in fashion as a man; that he did not deem equality with God a prize to be clutched at, but emptied himself to enter upon the earthly condition. The slave form was the humanity in its outward seeming. He had the seeming because he had the thing. Men saw in him, not the "counterfeit presentment" of manhood, but manhood itself. The form of God was God appearing. He was not an angel who had put on the semblance of God. He was divine in his being, and so had the form belonging to God. The equality to God to which he might have aspired was not a prize to be clutched at, but was renounced in condescending, self-sacrificing love. Because of this act of love "God highly exalted him; and gave him the name above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow of those in heaven and in earth, and under the earth, and every tongue confess that

Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." [1]

The exalted Christ receives the homage of the created universe. Then he does not belong to the creation; creatures do not worship creatures. Is it said that Jesus receives exaltation to supremacy as a gift from God the Father? He does; and the gift is not arbitrarily bestowed, but expresses the fitness of Jesus to be so honored; a fitness in virtue of his being, his character, and his work. One who has given up the divine form of existence for the human form, and in that human form has surrendered himself to a violent death, and has through this act of love founded a spiritual kingdom among the men whose nature and lot he has assumed, should be adored by men and angels. Both see the divine love in him, and should worship it. If it is urged that Paul's declaration, that the confession of Christ's supreme Lordship is "to the glory of God the Father," shows that he did not believe Jesus to be divine, it is enough to an-

[1] Phil. ii. 9–11.

swer that this assumes that he could not have believed personal distinctions to have existed in the divine nature, an assumption proved by this very passage to be unwarranted. If he ascribes to Christ the possession of a divine being and the reception of divine honors, and also speaks of a divine Father to whom these honors ultimately flow, we must let these words present to us his thought of the divine nature. We may not explain away a part of his language because it does not accord with the notion of deity which we assume him to have.

Paul told the Corinthian Church that Christian monotheism included, along with the recognition of God as the source and goal of the universe and of the Christian life, the recognition of Jesus Christ as the mediator through whom the universe came into being, and through whom the Christian life began.[1] "An idol is nothing, and there is no God but one. For although there are many alleged gods, whether in heaven or in earth, just as there

[1] 1 Cor. viii. 4, 5, 6.

are [according to heathen systems of worship] gods many and lords many, yet to us there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things, and for whom we are, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom are we." As against the imaginary many gods of polytheism, the Christian has one God the Father, one Lord Jesus Christ. Is it said that a lower place is assigned to Jesus Christ than to the Father? His relation to the Father is explained in the following words: "Through whom are all things; and we through him." By his agency the universe comes into being. The universe has its ultimate source in the will and mind of God the Father; its mediate source in the activity of Jesus. Creative activity is divine activity. He who exercises it is not a part of the creation. In saying, therefore, as he virtually does, that Christian monotheism includes recognition of Jesus Christ through whom God creates the universe, Paul ascribes divineness to him. We find here, as in the Philippian passage, evidence that he thought

of the one divine nature as having in itself personal distinctions, by virtue of which Jesus Christ, as well as the Father, could be called divine.

In the Colossian letter[1] Paul separates Christ from the creation, calling him "first-born as regards every creature," and saying that all things were created through him and for him, and that all things stand together in him, as though he not only put forth the activity bringing the universe into being, but was the principle, as it were, uniting it and preserving it. This we believe he could not have said of a creature.

In these assertions about the preëxistent Christ, Paul seems to have ascribed to him a divine nature. A confirmation of our interpretation may be found in his view of the relation which the incarnate Christ sustains towards the human race. He is to Paul, as we have already said, its head, the member of it whose life is of supreme significance to every person in it. This he is not only

[1] Col. i. 15, 16.

ideally, by virtue of having carried humanity to perfection in his own life, but actually, by virtue of power to draw its members into union with himself and participation of his perfection. "The last Adam became a life-giving spirit." [1] He gives life to his brother-men. So he draws them to him one by one, transforming them as they become united to him, until at last all the race (substantially all, at any rate) share his life, his character, and his divine sonship. And how does this man draw other men to himself? What makes him "life-giving spirit"? Why are all possibilities for mankind in him? Because he has the Spirit of God, because the Spirit of God is *his* Spirit, so that that Spirit may be thought of as Christ in activity. What does this mean but that the humanity of Christ is divine; that the Son of God has become this man, and is in him the fountain of a new life for mankind? From Jesus Christ, God's Spirit goes out into mankind, because Jesus Christ has God's Spirit as the outgoing of his

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 45.

divine life. So the Apostle Paul can speak of the Spirit of God as also the Spirit of Christ, and can say that the indwelling of this Spirit in a man is equivalent to the indwelling of Christ in him.

If we believe that Paul saw in Christ a human life to which the divine Son had so given himself as to make it divine, we can see why he ascribes such powers to the exalted Redeemer, and why he recognizes in him the first fruits of a redeemed humanity. Without this belief, his doctrine of a divine life-giving man is an enigma to us. And can we think that he would have called the Spirit of God the "Spirit of Christ" unless he had believed Christ to be divine?

It may be objected that, if Paul had held the view of Christ's person which we ascribe to him, he could not have said that, after all things shall have been subdued to the Son, he will be subjected to God, in order that God may be all in all.[1] If this passage taught that Christ would at some time take the place of

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 28.

a creature, we should find in it an affirmation contradictory to the passages we have cited as teaching that he is not a created being. We do not find such teaching in it. The reign ascribed to the Son in the passage is the activity growing out of the presence of sin in the world. The divine-human Redeemer is at the head of a redemptive economy. All divine forces available for the recovery of men from sin go from him. In him, men coming out of sin touch God. For them to know God is to know him revealed in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself. Their conceptions of God are chiefly thoughts of a redeeming Saviour. Their service of God is essentially service of the redeeming Christ. When all the enemies shall have been put down, it will be otherwise. That which God is in himself will come more clearly into view. Men will not simply possess his redeeming love in Christ, they will possess the exhaustless wealth of his being. The divine humanity will abide, but will be seen as the manifestation of the glory of God. This is what

we believe Paul to have meant by the ultimate subjection of the Son, in order that God may be all in all. He cannot have meant that God would remove from his throne a creature whom he had temporarily placed there.

But, it may still be objected, Paul does not apply the term "God" (θεὸς) to Christ. He does not, because he does not think that God and Christ are exact equivalents. He did not hold, as the Christian church has never held, that the Deity is nothing more nor less than Jesus Christ. But this does not imply his not holding that Jesus Christ was divine, was in the being of God. If the revelation he received from Christ did, indeed, lead Paul to ascribe divine attributes to his Master, and so modify his conception of the divine Being, would not this change in his theology be naturally expressed by language such as we find him using, "To us there is one God the Father, of whom are all things, and we to him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him"?

We pass on to the writings of the other

apostles. Here, we need hardly say, Christ has the same prominence as in the Pauline letters. The gospel which they convey is the good tidings about him. They say that the spiritual relation with him which faith establishes is the one condition of living in fellowship with God and securing a holy character. At one with Paul here, his fellow-apostles were presumably at one with him in his conception of Christ. Is there evidence that they, too, believed Jesus to be divine? We think that there is. The Apocalypse pictures the Lamb slain as receiving the worship of the created universe:[1] "And every creature in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and in the sea, and all things in them, heard I saying, To the one sitting upon the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, for ever and ever." It represents Jesus as saying of himself, in words almost exactly reproducing those which the Hebrew prophet ascribes to Jehovah: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and

[1] Rev. v. 13.

the end."[1] To the seer his being seemed to lie outside of and to include the universe. This is not creaturely being. In an earlier passage of the Apocalypse the same language is applied to the Almighty God.[2] If this teaching seems contradicted by the title given to Jesus elsewhere, — "beginning of the creation of God,"[3] — it is only just to say that ἀρχὴ means "principle" or "source" as well as "beginning" (Weizsäcker renders it here *Urgrund*), and that we may only ascribe self-contradictory affirmations to a writer when forced to do so by linguistic necessity. The First Epistle of Peter speaks of Christ in language which Isaiah uses of Jehovah:[4] "Fear ye not their fear, neither be terrified. But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts." The prophet says: "Neither fear ye their fear, nor be in dread thereof. The Lord of hosts, him shall ye sanctify."[5] Must not the writer have felt that Christ was to his people what Jehovah was to the children of Israel?

[1] Rev. xxi. 6. [2] Rev. i. 8. [3] Rev. iii. 14.
[4] 1 Pet. iii. 14, 15. [5] Is. viii. 12, 13.

We come to the Fourth Gospel. This we believe to have been written by the Apostle John. Many hold it to be a production of the second century. They will probably demur to our using it as a source of knowledge as to the religious belief of primitive Christianity. Yet it is proper to remind them that the leading critics of their school suppose that the author used a tradition coming through the Apostle John, and to ask them whether, if this were the case, the author of the Gospel and the apostle did not probably agree in their conception of Christ.

The Gospel presents Jesus as the incarnate Word. And what does the writer mean by the "Word"? Evidently a personal principle in the divine Being. "The Word was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him" (the personal pronoun is used). "Life was in him, and the life was the light of men." John the Baptist came to testify to the light which the life in the Word was. This light, the true light, was coming into the world. "The Word was made flesh and tabernacled

among us, full of grace and truth, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father."[1] A personal and a divine life are attributed to this Word which became incarnate. If Paul ascribed personality to the Lord Jesus Christ in his preëxistent state, when he said that all things were through him, John, it would seem, ascribed personality to the preëxistent Word in making the same affirmation of him. Dr. Wendt, of Heidelberg, has lately advanced a different interpretation, namely, that the "Word" is revelation personified.[2] John would declare, he says, that as the creation was a divine "Word," *i. e.* a self-expression of God, and as the impartation of religious life to men was also such a "Word," so Christ was in a yet fuller sense "the Word." We do not find an adequate explanation of the writer's language in this interpretation. He speaks in plain, didactic phrase, just such as is employed in the rest of the Gospel. One naturally believes that he is writing prose, not poetry. His

[1] John i. 1–14. [2] *Die Lehre Jesu*, 308.

repetitions suggest that he is making statements of transcendent truth which challenge belief. The progress of his thought belongs to theology, not poetry; and the several statements imply that the "Word" is a personal principle in God, not a personified divine activity. "This one was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and apart from him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men." "And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us, full of grace and truth, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father."

Could all this be said, by such a writer as the author of the Fourth Gospel, of a personified work or attribute of God? How, for example, could it be said that in this work or attribute was life, and the life was the light of men? If we conclude that the prologue presents Jesus Christ as the personal Word incarnate, we shall find abundant confirmation of this conclusion in the narrative. He appears in it expressing the belief that he had a divine

life before his earthly life began. "Before Abraham was, I am,"[1] he said to the Jews when they asked him whether he, a man not yet forty, had seen Abraham. "Glorify thou me, O Father," he said in his high-priestly prayer, "with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."[2] Is further proof needed to justify the statement that the Christ of the Fourth Gospel was as truly divine as human, true God as well as true man?

A word may be said of such New Testament books as were not written by apostles. These give us important secondary evidence as to the apostolic belief about the person of Christ; for they were written when the apostles' recollection of Jesus was vivid, and were addressed to communities containing some Christians who had had personal intercourse with at least one of the twelve. If, then, we should find in any of these writings a different conception of Christ's person from that given in such New Testament compositions as were composed by apostles, we

[1] John viii. 58. [2] John xvii. 5.

might suspect that this differing opinion was held by some of the twelve. If, on the other hand, we find that they all express the same belief about the Master with that appearing in the Apostolic Scriptures, then we cannot hesitate in concluding that the twelve, as to this central matter of belief, were of one mind.

Turning to the books in question, we find that they all represent Christ to have been divine. The Epistle of James, in calling him "The Lord of Glory," [1] ascribes divinity to him. The First Gospel does so in representing him as saying after his resurrection, "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth," and as associating himself with the Father in the formula of baptism.[2] The Epistle to the Hebrews ascribes divinity to Christ in saying that he was the effulgence of God's glory, and the very image of his substance; that "when he had made purification of sins, he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." [3]

[1] James ii. 1. [2] Matt. xxviii. 18. [3] Hebrews i. 3.

There is no discordant note in the New Testament literature. This fact would justify us in believing that all the apostles held Jesus to be divine, even though the proofs that the Epistles of Peter and the Johannean writings were written by apostles were as weak as some hold them to be.

Our conclusion is, that the apostolic writings show that the doctrine of the divinity of Christ was imbedded in the religious consciousness of the primitive church.

The earliest Christian faith and devotion were inspired by the conviction that Jesus, Messiah, was divine.

CHAPTER III.

THE SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS OF JESUS.

DID Jesus believe himself to be a Divine Being? This question has, of course, a paramount place in the inquiry about his divinity. It is impossible to think that he could have been such a person as the apostles believed him to have been, without having had some consciousness of the fact. We say "some consciousness," for we do not think that the precise form which this consciousness would assume can be confidently affirmed on *à priori* grounds. Paul says that Jesus Christ was "found in fashion as a man."[1] John says that "the Word became flesh."[2] To both these apostles, and to all the apostolic church, Jesus was really a man, and lived as human a life as has ever been lived in this world.

This implied his having a man's mind, a mind having a human knowledge of itself and

[1] Phil. ii. 7. [2] John i. 14.

of things other than itself. As a recent writer has said, "If in any one thing the man Christ Jesus knew *as God*, knew *because* he was God, knew after the μορφή or mode of the divine and not human knowledge, in that thing his humanity was violated, ceased to be humanity, and became or was changed into divinity. A human mind can only know in accordance with the laws and conditions of the human mind and of human knowledge. When it knows outside of these, it is not a human mind."[1] This is as true when the thing known is the knowing mind itself as when it is something else. Hence Jesus Christ's being the person whom the apostles believed him to be does not imply that his self-consciousness fully comprehended an infinite nature, — however really it reached into and vitally reflected the Divine Life, — but the contrary. For the self-consciousness which comprehends the infinite is the activity of a divine, not of a human mind.

[1] Du Bose: *The Soteriology of the New Testament*, p. 147.

Some say that, if Jesus Christ were truly divine, his self-consciousness must have been that of the absolute God, and that therefore such a person as the apostles believed him to have been cannot have existed. This assumption we believe an arbitrary one, based on wrong conceptions of the nature of God and that of man, and their mutual affinities and relations. Why could not the Infinite Being have so united himself to the life of a creature made in his image as to have that life in its limitations as one of the forms of his own life?

The dogmatic affirmation that he could not do this, and that the church, in believing that he has done so, believes that something took place which cannot possibly have taken place, ought to have little weight with thoughtful minds.

What form Jesus' divineness — assuming him to have been divine — took on in his self-consciousness, we cannot affirm *à priori*. But we can and must affirm that in some form it was present in his thought of himself. The

union with God which the apostles ascribed to him implied a position as regards men which must have been known in order to be worthily filled. If there were an Incarnate Son, he had a work to do for mankind. He could not do this work unless he knew the significance his life had for all men. He must have been, then, if he were indeed the Christ whom the primitive church adored, aware that he was in the life of God in a way in which no other man can be, and that homage belongs to him due to no one who is merely man.

Do the expressions of Jesus' thought of himself which have come down to us show that he seemed to himself to be thus uniquely related to God and exalted above men? Those expressions, so far as they by general consent bear the stamp of Jesus' mind, and of his only, are found in the apostolic tradition preserved in the first three Gospels. How far may the words of Jesus contained in that tradition be presumed to convey his thought of himself?

The oldest of our Gospels was written about

the year 70. The earlier one, now lost, a great part of which is preserved in Luke and Matthew, was probably written a very few years earlier.

For more than thirty years the sayings and acts of Jesus were preserved in the memory of his original disciples and their converts. They did not lie idle there, but were constantly used in teaching. Paul's citation of the words of Jesus spoken at the institution of the Lord's Supper,[1] and of his teaching about divorce,[2] shows this.

These sayings, kept for religious uses, were a part of the religion of those who held them. They touched and quickened the religious life of the disciples when they were spoken. Their religious power prevented them from perishing in the moment of utterance; their felt religious value caused their constant use in the following years. They lived in the hearts of those who first heard them, and therefore ultimately found a place, a supreme place, in literature. Evidently the biographi-

[1] 1 Cor. xi. 23. [2] 1 Cor. vii. 10.

cal motive, the desire to gratify curiosity, had little place in the minds of those who transmitted the words of Jesus to the following generation. They told their recollections of him in order that men might believe in him as the divine Messiah. The earliest written account of him begins: "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God."[1] Mark wrote because he believed that Jesus' life was a message of grace which men needed to hear. In the same belief, and for the same reason, the apostles had recited for a generation the facts which he gathered into his Gospel. It may be presumed that the motive which caused the words of Jesus to be preserved by frequent repetition did not apply with equal force to all of them. Those were repeated which were most clearly and emphatically expressed, both because the memory grasped them firmly and because they could be advantageously used in teaching. Words in which self-expression predominated over teaching, the familiar utterance of intimate

[1] Mark i. 1.

friendship, the suggestive but half-understood personal revelation, would, if they were imprinted in memory, gradually pass out of the common recollection, because they were not available for preaching use. We find a very few such words in our Gospels. Presumably a far greater number perished. We learn in the Gospel narratives of occasions on which Jesus had familiar conversation with his disciples, such as the little resting time spent on the east shore of Lake Gennesaret, before the multitude was taught and fed, but not a syllable of what he said on those occasions has been preserved. Probably many of those lost utterances were kept awhile in the memory of the twelve. The Fourth Gospel gives reason for believing that some of them were the lifelong possession of at least one apostle. The process of oral repetition, whose results are so plainly seen in the first three Gospels, gradually eliminated most of them from the tradition. For that process selected for use such sayings as were most easy of recollection by reason of their completeness of thought and

sharpness of expression. Among these lost sayings, it may be believed, were some which opened vistas into the religious consciousness of Jesus, — companion words to the saying which stands alone in the earliest written record of his teaching : " No one knoweth the Son save the Father ; neither doth any know the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him." [1]

We may not expect, then, to find in Jesus' words a direct expression other than meagre of his inner religious life. If he had uttered words conveying his consciousness of possessing a divine nature, it is quite possible that they would not have reached us. If his teaching, preserved by the apostles, gives evidence that he felt that he was divine, it must do so indirectly by showing that he felt himself to be to men what a divine person alone can be. Indirect evidence as to this matter may, it hardly need be said, be as convincing as direct proof. If Jesus said that he was to have the place in the human heart which man cannot

[1] Matt. xi. 27.

have, which belongs only to deity, then he believed himself to be divine.

What did he say about his place among them and his relation to them? He said that he was the Messiah. The kingdom of God so long expected by Israel, the consummation of the Hebrew religion, had come, — for he was in the world. He was the expected one, in and by whom the religious hope of the nation was to be realized. To Peter calling him "the Christ, the Son of the Living God," he answered, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."[1] To the high priest demanding if he were the Christ, the Son of the Blessed, he replied, "I am."[2]

It is true that Jesus did not at the beginning of his ministry formally present himself to his people as their Messiah. By doing so he would have created an excitement prejudicial to the religious influence which he desired to gain, and almost sure to call out repressive measures from the civil authority.

[1] Matt. xvi. 16, 17. [2] Mark xiv. 61, 62.

But he *acted as Messiah* from the first. We mean by this that he did the work and asserted the claim which belonged to Messiahship as it was understood by him. He began to make disciples as soon as he began to teach. These disciples were not merely pupils, like the disciples of the rabbis or of the Baptist. They were united to Jesus in a deeper relationship, one unique among the ties which bind men together. They were to live in absolute spiritual dependence upon him. His religious conceptions were to mould theirs. His "I say unto you" was to have with them an authority paramount to that of the Old Testament.[1] His thought of God, of life, of duty, of destiny, was to be theirs. They were to accept his application of spiritual truth to their life. Every earthly interest, even life itself, must be put at his disposal. "Whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."[2] "He that loveth father or mother, . . . son or daughter, more than me is not

[1] Matt. v. 21 ff. [2] Luke xiv. 33.

worthy of me."[1] "There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or mother, or father, or children, or lands, for my sake and for the gospel's sake, but he shall receive a hundredfold now in this time,"[2] etc.

Jesus asked all the people to enter into this relationship with him. From those who consented he chose twelve to be his companions, and to give him special assistance in his work. Their discipleship was not a tie of a different kind from that which joined the other disciples to him. The relationship was in all cases essentially the same, for it implied in all cases absolute spiritual dependence. Those who gave up their occupations to follow Jesus only showed more plainly in the form of their life the supreme devotion which had to be given to him by those who would be his followers. The rich young man, in refusing to sell his property and give it to the poor, at his command, and then to follow Jesus, excluded himself from discipleship by the refusal. Only by this sacrifice could he gain the disciple's place.

[1] Matt. x. 37. [2] Mark x. 29, 30.

Jesus' spiritual sway over his disciples — a dominion which he desired to extend over all his people and over all men — was what Messiahship meant to him. The kingdom of God which he heralded was a spiritual kingdom, God's reign in human hearts. His historic work in establishing that kingdom was to win men's hearts to God and to righteousness. The forces which he used in doing this work were spiritual forces. He set aside in the wilderness, after his baptism, the thought of establishing a government. He would have no power over men which did not have its seat in the spiritual nature. He refused, for this reason, to act as referee in a family dispute about property.[1] He deprecated paying honor to his mother and his brothers on his account, lest Messiahship should seem to involve social distinction.[2] At Cæsarea Philippi, after receiving and commending Peter's acknowledgment that he was the Messiah, Jesus went on to predict his rejection by the Jewish authorities, and his execution at their hands.[3]

[1] Luke xii. 14. [2] Mark iii. 33. [3] Mark viii. 31.

Then he added that his followers must be prepared to share his fate.[1] Willingness to give up all for his sake and the gospel's belonged to the subjects of this King. For he was a spiritual King; his claim to rule was the claim of the truth in him. As the earthly head of a spiritual kingdom he could only ask for spiritual subjection. If his disciples did what he told them to do, it was because they could by their obedience show devotion to the spiritual principles which lived in him and asserted themselves through him. When, for example, they prepared the paschal supper, they obeyed *religiously*. They felt that in doing their Master's bidding they were not rendering blind obedience to a masterful will, but that they were owning the supremacy of God and of righteousness.

Hence discipleship meant to Jesus and to the disciples a genial sway. The claim made was always felt to be the claim of the moral and spiritual principles embodied in the Master. "Go your way, and tell John the things

[1] Mark viii. 34, ff.

which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, . . . and the poor have good tidings preached unto them, and blessed is he whosoever shall find none occasion of stumbling in me."[1] To lay down life for Jesus' sake is to lay it down likewise for the gospel's sake. His yoke is an easy yoke, his burden a light burden, because they are the yoke and the burden of the truth which man was made to obey. Jesus asked no other authority over the mind or conscience than that which goes with love, the deepest, most reverential love possible to man.

This authority he did seek. The truth which he gave men was the truth of his life. Its supremacy was his supremacy. Here we are obliged to differ from some careful and reverent students of Jesus' life. They believe that he claims a supremacy for his teaching which he does not claim for himself. He seems to them only a prophet, who brings a message which he knows to have a divine

[1] Matt. ii. 4, ff.

sanction and an unequaled value. He wields authority, but it is that of his message only. He has spiritual power; it is the power of the teacher, who uses the truth which he has found to draw men to the God whom he loves. We believe this interpretation of Jesus' thought of himself to be inadequate. It does not explain his identifying his person with the message he brought, as he did when he asked men to sacrifice their earthly interests for his sake and the gospel's. To give up all for the truth was to give up all for him; to give up all for him was to renounce it for the truth. What can this mean, except that such supremacy and value as belong to the highest truth, the truth of God's life, belongs to Jesus? Think of Paul's urging his converts to give up all for his sake and the gospel's!

The manner of Jesus' teaching shows, we believe, that he did not exalt his message above himself. He spake "as one having authority." When he corrected the teaching of the law with his "I say unto you," he seemed to imply that a better revelation of

God dwelt in him than that which the Hebrew people had received. Could one merely a prophet, albeit the greatest of the prophets, have spoken so? A prophet brings a message disclosing God's mind for his people in some single juncture of their life; a message reproducing a vision of truth fitting that special circumstance; a fragment of truth, although a vital and imperishable fragment. But here is one who brings, not a message, but a revelation; who carries the truth of the kingdom of God so long hoped for; the word of the kingdom which has the promise of the kingdom in itself; the truth of God's being, of man's need, of God's provision for that need. Is he to be numbered among the prophets? Or does his word belong to him as the prophet's did not? Does it express the secret of a life united to God as no other human life can be? We seem to have Jesus' answer to this question in that saying which claims a unique knowledge under the limitations of humanity, and suggests a self-consciousness including a divine nature: "But of that day

or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father."[1] We seem to have a more distinct answer to the question in the deep utterance: "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth the Son save the Father; neither doth any know the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him."[2] He has a personal knowledge of the Father all his own, corresponding to God's knowledge of him. By virtue of this knowledge he can show God to men. He is the teacher because he is the revealer; he is the revealer because he is the Son who knows the Father with a knowledge exclusively his own. The greatness of the truth given is, in the last analysis, only the greatness of the person giving it.

The use which Jesus made of his miracles furnishes additional evidence that the theory which we are considering is without foundation. He treated them as elements of a self-revelation. They were object-lessons,

[1] Mark xiii. 32. [2] Matt. xi. 27.

making it plain what he was to his people. The cure of the paralyzed man showed that he had power on earth to forgive sins.[1] His casting out demons by the finger of God showed that the kingdom of God had come unto his people, — had come, that is, in the person of his Son. For the context proves that this is what he meant: "You Pharisees say that I cast out demons by collusion with Satan, their prince. No; Satan's house is not thus divided against itself. My casting out of demons is due, not to Satanic but to anti-Satanic power, the power of God. And if I by his power cast them out, his kingdom has come unto you"[2] (*i. e.* in me). To John's disciples, asking if he were indeed the Messiah, Jesus answered, "Go and tell John of my works. And blessed is he whosoever shall not find cause of stumbling in me."[3]

These are not the words of one whose single claim to attention was the truth he brought, but of one who felt that he had the truth in himself, and was therefore the earthly head of the kingdom of the truth.

[1] Mark ii. 10. [2] Matt. xii. 28. [3] Matt. xi. 4, ff.

We have a test of the correctness of our interpretation of Jesus' thought of his Messiahship in his representation of the kingdom of God as it is to exist in its ideal completeness in heaven. To this perfected kingdom he taught his disciples to look, as fully embodying the principles of God's reign over men. The petition of the disciples' prayer, "Thy kingdom come," shows that he wished them to have it often in their minds. Of that kingdom he is to be the head. "Ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds of heaven."[1] "And then shall he send forth the angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds."[2] "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all the nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats."[3]

[1] Mark xiv. 62. [2] Mark xiii. 27.

[3] Matt. xxv. 31, 32.

Some critics do not believe that Jesus spoke these words. They are found in the earliest written accounts of his teaching; there is no ground, except such as their contents may furnish, for questioning their authenticity. They present Jesus as the head of the perfected kingdom, a Divine Being, exalted above the creation. The divineness in heaven which his prediction ascribed to him was that which he consciously possessed during his earthly life. For then he was Messiah, asking and receiving such homage from men as could be given to a man only by those lost to self-respect.

One of the ablest of living Unitarians insists that Jesus did not claim Messiahship. He thinks that he sees evidence that the passages of the Gospels in which he appears to present himself as Messiah are so colored by the disciples' later thought as to misrepresent the Master. The criticism by which this conclusion is supported deals with the Gospels after a summary fashion, as will appear from the following specimen of it. Mark appends

to the account of Peter's confession of Jesus' Messiahship, on the day of Cæsarea Philippi, the words, "And he charged them that they should tell no man of him."[1] These words are changed by the criticism of the writer in question to the following: "Silence! to not a creature are you to say such a thing again!" that is, a disclaimer of the Messiahship.[2] Such striving with the narrative to remove out of it what even Strauss admits to be a feature of Jesus' life, suggests a wish to escape from a theological difficulty. The clear mind of the writer in question sees that, once he admits that Jesus claims Messiahship, he is confronted with the old dilemma, "Aut Deus, aut homo non bonus."[3] He justly says that "between soul and soul, even the greatest and the least, there can be in the things of righteousness and love no lordship and ser-

[1] Mark viii. 30.

[2] James Martineau's *The Seat of Authority in Religion*, p. 349.

[3] See Gove's *The Incarnation of the Son of God*, p. 258.

vitude, but the sublime sympathy of a joint worship on the several steps of a never-ending ascent." [1] One who believes this and cannot believe that Jesus is divine may well add that "in professions of belief, in definitions of doctrine, in forms of prayer, the Messianic language has settled with the most tenacious hold, and, unless it be loosened thence, our religion will perish in its grasp." [2]

Those whose hearts move them to call Jesus "Master and Lord" gladly agree with this clear thinker in believing that to admit his Messiahship is to put him above mankind, and they rejoice in the assurance that the apostolic record of his Messianic claim will never be impeached by an unbiased criticism.

Can one who felt himself to be divine, it is asked, have said, as did Jesus to the rich young man, "Why callest thou me good? None is good save one, even God"? [3] Yes, one who had divineness in a human nature which

[1] James Martineau's *The Seat of Authority in Religion*, p. 356.

[2] Martineau, *opus cit.* p. 357. [3] Mark x. 18.

was working out goodness under the stress of temptation could say this. The objection is only another form of the dogmatic assumption which we examined at the beginning of this discussion, — the assumption that God cannot so unite himself to a human soul as to make it divine. And what man could rightly lay on another a specific command like that which Jesus laid on the rich young man, making obedience to it a condition of admission to the kingdom of God?

It is sometimes said, if Jesus were conscious of being divine, why did he not make this consciousness prominent in his teaching? The objection, we believe, will not count for much, when the aim of his intercourse with the people is remembered. It was that of giving a knowledge of God through the medium of his life and words. This aim led him to try to come near men, to show them his heart in the revelations of friendship. Only by doing this could he show them what his character was, and how it revealed God. Disclosure of his divineness (assuming him to

have been divine) would have kept the people from knowing Jesus in this way. They would have been so dazzled and excited by his divinity as to be unable to appreciate his character. Therefore those who hold Jesus to have been divine see nothing demanding explanation in his reticence as to that which made him other than man.

We close our discussion with a word as to the light which the Fourth Gospel throws upon the self-consciousness of Jesus. It presents to us the Incarnate Word. It represents him as saying to the Jews, "Before Abraham was, I am," [1] and as saying to the Father, on the eve of the Passion, "Glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." [2] It attributes to Jesus the consciousness of a Sonship which lay within the divine life. Believing that this Gospel was written by the Apostle John, we find in its portrayal of Jesus important information as to his self-consciousness. We are not disposed to insist

[1] John viii. 58. [2] John xvii. 5.

that all the words which it attributes to the Master are exact reports of what he said. We think we see in them evidence of a teaching of the Spirit given to the apostle after Jesus had left the earth. This teaching took up the Master's words stored in memory into a fuller revelation. How far this later gift of Christ is embodied in the Fourth Gospel is a question to which, we believe, criticism can never give a precise answer. Such an answer is not necessary for a right use of the Gospel in finding the self-consciousness of Jesus. The testimony of the writer underlying the whole representation is the main thing. If an apostle, one of the three most with Jesus, portrays him as living and laboring in the conscious possession of a divine Sonship, and in the belief that he had a prœexistent divine life, we cannot but believe that Jesus showed himself to his disciples as other than man. For, leaving the question of inspiration entirely out of consideration, we revere the apostle's words as those of a holy man, and a man whose moral

intuitions were peculiarly clear. The picture of the Jesus of history drawn from memory by such a man may have imperfection, but cannot be essentially false. It is the picture of the Christ conscious of divineness, who felt that to see him was to see the Father,[1] and who felt and owned that he had succeeded in making his disciples fully know him when the most unbelieving of them had made the confession, "My Lord and my God." [2]

[1] John xiv. 9. [2] John xx. 28.

CHAPTER IV.

THE EARLY CHURCH.

EVIDENCE has been adduced, in preceding chapters, to show that the first disciples recognized the divinity of their Master and Lord, and that he knew himself to be divine. We now inquire whether these conclusions are affected by later testimonies. If it should appear that the generations immediately following the age of the apostles regarded Jesus as merely a man, however distinguished and exalted, we might claim that they had failed to appreciate the original teaching, but we could not question that our own understanding of it was confronted with a serious difficulty. On the other hand, if their testimony favors the interpretation which has been put upon the primitive teaching, we are supplied with a corroborative argument of no little value, and this just in proportion as we are able to assure our-

selves that we are dealing with a general and inherited Christian belief, and a living perpetuation of an impression which had been received from Jesus' own personality.

It is obvious that within the limits of this chapter we cannot aim at completeness of representation, although we may at comprehensiveness. We shall endeavor to point out the main sources of evidence, and indicate its variety, quality, and significance.[1]

We begin with the statements of the earlier and more representative Christian teachers and documents. Near the close of the apostolic age, a letter was sent from the church in Rome to the church in Corinth. It was intrusted to messengers, members of the Roman church, who are commended as "faithful and sober-minded men that have walked from youth to old age unblamably amongst us." These men, as Bishop Lightfoot has noticed,

[1] For a more full presentation, at many points, see Dorner, *History of the Development of the Doctrine of the Person of Christ*, Div. I. vol. i. pp. 92–184, English translation.

would have been "close upon thirty years of age when St. Paul first visited Rome," and they must have had an intimate knowledge of the beliefs and history of the church which sent them as its representatives. The occasion for such a delegation and letter was the peril the Corinthian church was incurring, and the reproach it was bringing on the Christian name by its unjust deposition of certain worthy presbyters, and its exhibition of a spirit of faction and sedition. No doctrinal question, so far as appears, was in issue. The burden of the Roman letter is the duty and excellence of submission to rightful authority, of humility and brotherly love, of harmony and order. The motives which are oftenest appealed to, or most fully exhibited, are the evils of envy and jealousy; the ordinances, commandments, and will of God; the noble examples of godly men who had hearkened to the divine oracles, and had been faithful, humble, and obedient; the fear of the Lord, which is good and sweet and saving, and is confirmed by "the faith which is in Christ;" the call and election by

God. Paul's doctrine of justification by faith without works is introduced under the general conception of the supremacy of the divine will, and good works are urged from this same point of view. Although the object of the letter makes such a method natural and suitable, it would seem to be also congenial to the writer's spirit, and to indicate his point of view. Whether he was of Jewish or Gentile extraction cannot be determined, but it is probable that he was, or had been, a member of the emperor's household. In the strong emphasis which he lays upon the will and authority of the Almighty Ruler of the world (ὁ δεσπότης), in the stress put upon order and obedience, we may suspect an influence from his Roman training. He commends conformity to the heavenly ordinances, and the duty of subordination in the church, by the example "of the soldiers that are enlisted under our rulers," and the gradations of office in the empire.[1] Beyond question is the impress from the Old Testament teachings and piety.

[1] Ch. xxxvii.

So strong are these influences, — the immediate purpose of the letter to commend submissiveness to precepts, ordinances, and rulers; the Roman training of the writer, or the influence of the palace; his familiarity with the ancient Scriptures, and love for its conceptions of God and of the religious life, — that they throw somewhat into the background the distinctively Christian conceptions of the letter. These are, however, in some respects all the more impressive when we take into account the conditions under which they appear. We discover them springing up, as by some constantly present and active power, in the midst of those directly derived from other sources. They lend a coloring and a distinction to other elements with which they are associated or blended. We are reminded not only of an ideal of virtue, but of its exemplification perfectly in One in whom men are saved,[1] and in impressive measures in others whose standard is "that which becometh Christ."[2] We come upon a higher conception of God,

[1] Ch. xxxviii. [2] Ch. iii.

an open and known way of access to him, a new name appropriated in religious trust and hope. The centre and life of these new conceptions and motives is the divinity of our Lord.

As already observed, the letter is pervaded by a profound sense of the divine sovereignty. A favorite title of the Most High is ὁ δεσπότης, which Bishop Lightfoot translates by the words, *The Master*,[1] suggesting thus an antithesis to a servant or slave, yet softening, perhaps, to a modern ear, through the Christian association of this title, the force of the expression it is employed to represent. The letter uses it with a full appreciation of its note of supremacy. "The Sovereign (ὁ δεσπότης) of the universe, brethren, hath need of nothing at all."[2] At the same time this sovereignty is set forth in a way which shows how Christianity was influencing men's conceptions of God. Not merely are his moral perfections associated with it, his care for his creatures, "the might-

[1] Sometimes, *Lord and Master*.

[2] Ch. lii. Cp. what is said of the Creator in ch. xxvii.

iness of the Sovereign's providence," [1] his mercy and benevolence; [2] all this and more is derived in this letter directly from the ancient Scriptures. Nor even may we suspect more than a heightened appreciation of what is revealed in these Scriptures, when the letter calls the Creator of the universe "our gentle and compassionate Father who made us an elect portion unto himself." [3] Nor, indeed, is it in any mere phrases about God that the change lies, but in the apprehensibleness of these moral perfections of divinity, in their concreteness and palpability, in their power as motives, and in the supremacy accorded to love as the summit and crown of all perfection, human or divine. "In love were all the elect of God made perfect; without love nothing is well-pleasing to God; in love the Sovereign (ὁ δεσπότης) took us unto himself; for the love which he had toward us, Jesus Christ our Lord hath given his blood for us, by the will of God, and his flesh for our flesh, and his life

[1] Ch. xxiv., ἡ μεγαλειότης τῆς προνοίας τοῦ δεσπότου.

[2] Chs. viii., ix., xx. [3] Ch. xxix.

for our lives." [1] The sacrificial quality of love, its concrete revelation in Jesus Christ our Lord, its association with the Sovereign Ruler of the world who takes men into union with himself, are here presented in a genuinely Christian way. The separation of God from men, either by the absoluteness of his nature or by his moral opposition, which the highest thought of the ancient world could not overcome, is transcended. Elsewhere the majesty of God is affirmed to be represented by him who came, not in the pomp which he might have worn, but in lowliness of mind.[2] He is our pattern.[3] And this revelation of God in service and sacrifice, through Jesus Christ our example, this letter testifies had taken effect. His sufferings, it says in a passage where the pronoun, according to the preferable reading, refers to God, were before the eyes of the Corinthian Christians in the days prior to the sedition which had broken out. They were filled with "an insatiable desire of doing

[1] Ch. xlix. [2] Ch. xvi.

[3] *Ibid.*, ὑπογραμμός; comp. 1 Pet. ii. 21.

good;" they contended "day and night for all the brotherhood;" they "murmured over the transgressions" of their "neighbors" and "judged their shortcomings to be your [their] own." Noble examples of sacrifice had, indeed, been set by others than Christians.[1] But now it was seen that such a spirit is from God; that it joins men to God; that it should be the ideal of human life; that it is attainable in its perfection. Something of its triumph is attested in this letter. Memories were fresh of the terrible persecution under Nero. The church realized that it still was "in the same lists."[2] Yet it prays for those who had been, and might soon be again its persecutors.[3] Evidently a new power or energy of motive had come into the lives of these Roman Christians which they believed to be from God.[4] They had learned that sacrificial love is the highest ideal of human life,

[1] Ch. lv. [2] Ch. vii.

[3] See Lightfoot's comments, *The Epistle of S. Clement*, pp. 266–269.

[4] Ch. l.

and that it is of ineffable beauty and majesty.[1] And they were assured of this, and were brought under its divine sway, through him who had brought them "under the yoke of his grace,"[2] and by the will of God had given his life for theirs. How could he have gained this power over them save as they saw in him a true reflection and image of God, and knew him in some real sense to be divine?

There is direct evidence that they so esteemed him. Christians are called and saved "in Christ Jesus." He is the Elect One through whom all others are chosen; in him is "that gate which is in righteousness . . . whereby all are blessed that have entered in;" through him, the beloved Son (παιδός), men love God, and are instructed, sanctified, and honored.[3] "This is the way, dearly beloved, wherein we found our salvation, even Jesus Christ the high-priest of our offerings, the Guardian and Helper of our weakness. Through him let us look steadfastly unto the

[1] Ch. xlix., l. [2] Ch. xvi.

[3] Chs. xxxii., xxxviii., xlvi., xlviii., xlix., l., lix., lxiv.

heights of the heavens; through him the eyes of our hearts were opened; through him our foolish and darkened mind leaves out afresh unto the light; through him the Sovereign (ὁ δεσπότης) willed that we should taste of the immortal knowledge; 'who being the brightness of his majesty is so much greater than angels, as he hath inherited a more excellent name.' For so it is written: 'Who maketh his angels spirits and his ministers a flame of fire, but of his son the Sovereign (ὁ δεσπότης) said thus: "Thou art my Son, I this day have begotten thee. Ask of me, and I will give thee the Gentiles for thine inheritance, and the ends of the earth for thy possession."'"[1] His death is put in universal relations. "Through the blood of the Lord there shall be redemption unto all them that believe and hope on God."[2] "Let us fix our eyes on the blood of Christ and understand how precious it is unto his Father, because being shed for our salvation it won for the whole world the grace of repentance."[3] He is "the sceptre

[1] Ch. xxxvi.; comp. ch. lix. [2] Ch. xii. [3] Ch. vii.

of the majesty of God."[1] He came into this world, where he might have appeared in glory, in humility. "He is with them that are lowly of mind."[2] His preëxistence is implied.[3] Through him the worship of the church is offered to God, "from the ages and to the ages forever." Two doxologies appear to be directly addressed to him.[4] In one passage, beyond reasonable dispute, he is associated with God and the Holy Spirit as "the faith and the hope of the elect," and with them is invoked.[5]

[1] Ch. xvi. [2] *Ibid.*

[3] Chs. xxii., xvi.; cp. xxxii., xlii., lxv. [4] Chs. xx., l.

[5] Ch. lviii.; cp. ch. xlvi., and ch. ii., if the reading τοῦ χριστοῦ should be confirmed; the presumption is now against it. On the passage in ch. lviii. Bishop Lightfoot remarks: "*First*, for the common adjuration in the Old Testament, 'as the Lord (*i. e.* Jehovah) liveth,' we find here substituted a form which recognizes the Holy Trinity. *Secondly*, this Trinity is declared to be the object or the foundation of the Christian's faith and hope." *Op. cit.* p. 272. Dr. Harnack comments thus: "Tres personas divinas hic numeravit Clemens, ut 2, 1 *sq.*, 46, 6. Hoc ideo grave videtur, quod disertis verbis tres illas personas

While Clement was writing this stately letter, or not far from this date, there was probably in circulation in Egypt, or, as some scholars suppose, first of all in Syria, a little tract, containing precepts respecting the way of life and the way of death, directions respecting church officers and rites, and an earnest exhortation to watchfulness. It belongs, if we consider simply its contents, to a very early stage of the church, and reflects its Jewish Christian beginnings. The more noteworthy for these reasons are its doctrinal allusions. Those who have been suitably instructed, it says, are to be baptized into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. This threefoldness of the revealed name of God is further emphasized by the mode of affusion which is prescribed,

fidem et spem electorum esse scriptor confitetur." *Patr. Apost. Op.* ed. 2, p. 96. Clement's words are: ζῇ γὰρ ὁ Θεὸς καὶ ζῇ ὁ κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, ἥ τε πίστις καὶ ἡ ἐλπὶς τῶν ἐκλεκτῶν: "For as God liveth, and the Lord Jesus Christ liveth, and the Holy Spirit, who are the faith and the hope of the elect."

"pour thrice upon the head."[1] In the tenth chapter occurs the phrase: "Hosannah to the God of David." The writer apparently is applying our Lord's argument recorded in the First Gospel.[2] David's Lord is to him David's God. In chapter xvi. it is said of the world-deceiver that he will appear "as Son of God," that is, as though he were Son of God; and the coming of him who, it is implied, is the true Son, the Lord, is described by a literal quotation of words of Zechariah which are applied to Jehovah.

The thought of Christ expressed or implied in these references, so far as this little practical manual is in point, must have belonged to the simplest elements of the early Christian teaching.

We turn from the conditions of thought and life implied in this rudimentary manual to those which were far more developed and complicated, perhaps to a time at least one or two decades later. The head of the church

[1] *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, ch. vii.

[2] Matt. xxii. 42–46.

in Antioch, then the political capital of the East, had been arrested and condemned, and was on his way to Rome to be "ground by the teeth of wild beasts" in the amphitheatre, and to be "an imitator of the passion of my [his] God." On his way he had personal intercourse with pastors and other representatives of leading churches with which the church of Antioch would naturally be in more or less intimate association, and wrote a number of letters which it is an inestimable service of recent criticism to have recovered to historical use.[1] Before this vindication the insight of Frederick Denison Maurice had given a point of view which relieved the pressure of the weightiest objections to their genuineness. He seized upon the essential personal characteristics of their author, and his central and ardent purpose. Ignatius is distinctively a great pastor, eager to save the

[1] Even if the authorship of these letters be questioned, they are a part of the representative Christian literature of the first half of the second century, and so are available for our purpose.

flock from preying wolves.[1] In the regions through which he passed, the churches were in peril from false teachers and partisan leaders. Doctrinally the exposure was especially great to a Jewish type of Docetism, a denial of the reality of Jesus' true humanity. That such a heresy could gain so great influence is a striking indication of the general belief in his superhuman origin and nature. Ignatius' most earnest doctrinal contention is, that he was truly born, truly ate, drank, suffered, died, — that he was a true man. While bent upon this purpose he testifies explicitly to his own faith, and by implication to that of some of the leading churches of his time, in the true divinity of our Lord. He is "God humanly manifested."[2] He "was with the Father before the worlds and appeared at the end of time" (ἐν τέλει ἐφάνη).[3] "There is one God, who manifested himself by Jesus Christ his Son, who is his Word, that proceeded from silence, who in all things was well-pleasing unto him that sent him."[4] "Stand thou firm,"

[1] *Phil.* ii. [2] *Eph.* xix. [3] *Magn.* vi. [4] *Magn.* viii.

he writes to Polycarp, "as an anvil when it is smitten. It is the part of a great athlete to receive blows and be victorious. But especially must we for God's sake endure all things, that he also may endure us. . . . Mark the seasons. Await him that is above every season, the Eternal, the Invisible, who became visible for our sake, the Impalpable, the Impassible, who suffered for our sake, who endured in all ways for our sake."[1] In the letter to the Romans there are some expressions of special interest: "For our God, Jesus Christ, being in the Father, is more brought into sight." We have here a striking indication of the effect of Jesus' resurrection, and of the inclusion within the church's vision of the glorified Christ. He became more plainly discernible in his true nature than he was in the days of his humiliation. This expression is followed immediately by another equally noteworthy, "Christianity is of greatness."[2] His standard and rule of conduct were, "to live

[1] *Polyc.* iii.

[2] Μεγέθους ἐστὶν ὁ χριστιανισμός, *Rom.* iii.

according to Christianity."[1] Men were to suffer, die, live nobly and victoriously, because Christ was their "inseparable life."[2] They were men recovered "in love which is the blood of Jesus Christ,"[3] who is at once "perfect man"[4] and "our God."[5]

We have selected three types of the early Christian belief concerning Christ: the cool, dispassionate Roman; the practical Jewish Christian; the fervid Oriental. Even if the "Didache" originated in Syria, it was early known in Egypt. We have therefore rounded a circle from Rome through Egypt and Syria and Asia Minor and Macedonia, and, by Ignatius' letter to the Romans, back to that church with which Irenæus tells us other churches were in necessary agreement. At no point is this agreement, natural and necessary in view of its origin and inner law, more marked than as respects the faith which rested in Christ.[6]

[1] *Mayn.* x. [2] *Eph.* iii.

[3] *Trall.* viii.; *Smyrn.* i. [4] *Ibid.* iv.

[5] *Polyc.* viii.; *Eph.* inscr. See Lightfoot's note *in loco.*

[6] From other works belonging to the Christian litera-

A valuable testimony to this agreement is preserved by Eusebius. Hegesippus, a Hebrew convert, he tells us, left a record of a journey which he took from the East to Rome. He met on the way "a great many bishops," and "received the same doctrine from all." He refers to the steadfastness in the faith of the church of Corinth, where he tarried "many days." "In every succession [of bishops] and

ture of the sub-Apostolic period, or prior to about the middle of the second century, similar testimonies to those selected above can easily be derived. Jesus Christ is our Lord and God, *Polyc. ad Phil.* xii.; our eternal High Priest, *ib.*; to him every living thing doeth service, *ib.* ii.; our hope, the earnest of our righteousness, our Judge, *ib.*, vi., viii.; his name sustains the whole creation, and is essential to salvation, *Hermas, S.* ix. 12, 14, 16. With him the Father conversed at the creation, *ib.* ix. 12, *Barnab.* v. He is Lord of the whole world, *ib.*, comp. xv., xxi.; *Ep. ad Diog.* vii.; "not . . . a subaltern, or angel, or ruler, . . . but the very Artificer and Creator of the universe himself, by whom he made the heavens. . . . Him he sent unto them," *ib.* "Brethren, we ought so to think of Jesus Christ as of God, as of the Judge of quick and dead," 2 *Clem.* i.

in every city that is held which is preached by the law and the prophets and the Lord." We know by other testimonies what belief he must have met with at various points. His account extends our knowledge of its prevalence. Religious trust in Christ as Saviour and Lord, belief in his divinity, was the common Christian faith.

A recent discovery makes available a similar testimony from a bishop in Asia Minor, which may have been written either before Hegesippus composed his "Memoirs," or not long after. Its author records that he is "a disciple of the pure Shepherd who feeds the flock of his sheep on mountains and plains, who has great eyes, observing all things;" that he had journeyed across Syria and the Euphrates as far as to Nisibis; he visited Rome, also, "the royal city;" and "everywhere I [he] found comrades, [I] having Paul. Faith everywhere led the way and proffered nourishment." In symbolical language he refers to the miraculous birth of our Lord; to the name of Jesus Christ, Son of God; and to the sacra-

ments. "The miraculous Incarnation," says Bishop Lightfoot, "and the omniscient, omnipresent energy of Christ, the Scriptural writings, the two sacraments, the extension and catholicity of the church, — all stand out in definite outline and vivid colors, the more striking because this is no systematic exposition of the theologian, but the chance expression of a devout Christian soul. . . . He visits the far West and the far East, and everywhere he finds not only the same church and the same sacraments, but also, as we may infer from his language, the same or substantially the same theology." [1]

With these early witnesses may be associated, for reasons which will be stated, three others of later date.

One of them is Celsus, who produced an elaborate work against Christianity about A. D. 177. The range of his learning is perhaps sometimes overestimated, yet he gathered his objections and reproaches from many sources, and used apparently every argument he could

[1] See *Andover Review*, ii. pp. 499–501, 518, 519.

think of, and this characteristic of his method makes his testimony significant for a time earlier than his own. He attacks the Christians protractedly and repeatedly for their belief that Jesus Christ is the son of God and God. It is opposed from the side of Judaism and of paganism, of religion and skepticism and philosophy and common sense, by argument, and by slander, mockery, and ridicule. Yet he nowhere charges that the Christians, as a body at least, had departed from their original faith, although he knows of divisions among them. It would have been a matter of much consequence to him if he could have shown, or even plausibly claimed, that their deification of Christ was an afterthought. He accredits their faith in his divinity with a rooted tenacity. Pressing the objection that the homage paid by Christians to Christ as Lord "divides the kingdom of God and raises a sedition therein," he says: "If you should tell them [the Christians] that Jesus is not the Son of God, but that God is the Father of all, and that he alone ought to be truly

worshiped, they would not consent to discontinue their worship of him who is their leader in the sedition. And they call him Son of God, not because they exceedingly reverence God, but because they exceedingly extol him" [that is, the Son].[1]

Irenæus claims attention on many grounds. He was a pupil of Polycarp, the friend of Ignatius, and disciple of the Apostle John. Educated in the East, he visited Rome, and became a presbyter, and subsequently a bishop, in Gaul. No one had better opportunities to understand the Christian thought of his century, or was more thoroughly in sympathy with the highest life and purest traditions of the churches. Of his own undoubting trust in Jesus Christ as a divine Saviour he has left complete assurance, nor has he any doubt of what, on this point, is the common and original Christian faith. "The church," he says, "though scattered through the whole world, even to the ends of the earth, has received from the apostles and their disciples

[1] *Cont. Cel.*, viii. 14.

the faith in one God, the Father Almighty, who made the heaven and the earth, and the seas and all that in them is; and in one Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who became flesh for our salvation; and in the Holy Spirit, who through the prophets proclaimed . . . the bodily (ἔνσαρκον) ascension into heaven of the beloved Christ Jesus our Lord, and his coming from heaven in the glory of the Father 'to gather all things in one,' and to raise up anew all flesh of all mankind, in order that to Christ Jesus our Lord and God and Saviour and King, according to the good pleasure of the invisible Father, 'every knee should bow,' . . . and that he should execute righteous judgment towards all."

In the following context he draws a distinction between this fundamental and continuous faith of the church and its theological exposition. Irenæus's own opinions show that tradition may be misleading, as he himself recognizes, and requires to be tested. In the passage we have cited he is delivering an

open, public, common, easily tested tradition. Changes had taken place within the churches since their apostolic institution, some of which he may not have duly appreciated. But an alteration of the fundamental creed of the church, a transition from a faith in a human leader to a faith in a demi-god, and then to one in a being truly divine, was not only wholly beyond his knowledge, but beyond what it is reasonable to suppose could have occurred without his cognizance of it. A revolution so great and gradually accomplished would have occurred too near the time of which he had personal information, or which was controlled for him by a secure tradition, and it would have affected too seriously what was vital to him in the gospel not to have been discernible by him and known by him. He knows of nothing of the sort.

Prior to Eusebius the most learned man in the Christian church was Origen, who wrote about A. D. 230 a work on "First Principles." It is a highly speculative treatise, but contains, as an introduction, a statement of what was

esteemed in the churches as of apostolic teaching. Following the same order which appears in the statement just quoted from Irenæus, Origen gives, as the second article of the common faith, the following: "That Jesus Christ himself, who came, was born of the Father before all creatures, and when, in the formation of all things, he had ministered to the Father, 'for by him all things were made,' in the last times, emptying himself, he became man, and was incarnate although God, and made man remained, as he was, God. He assumed a body like to our body, differing in this respect only, that it was born of a virgin and of the Holy Spirit. And since this Jesus Christ was born and suffered in truth, and not in appearance, he endured the death common [to man] and truly died; for he truly rose from the dead, and after his resurrection he conversed with his disciples and was taken up [into heaven]."

Before we pass to a distinct class of evidence, it is pertinent to consider whether there was in the church a different tradition

from the one which we have been following; and, further, if there was such a tradition, what importance is to be attached to it as an indication of the primitive belief in Christ, and of the impression he had made.

A humanitarian interpretation of Christ's personality was advocated at Rome, by certain teachers of whom we know almost nothing, near the close of the second century and in the beginning of the third. They were excommunicated from the church, and their views were deemed novel as well as blasphemous. They were the first, so far as we know, to dissent from the common tradition on historical grounds. They were met by an appeal to the Scriptures, and also to leading witnesses of what had been the Christian faith, going back to the Clement whose testimony we have adduced. In all their works, it is alleged, "Christ is spoken of as God." Eusebius, who quotes these words, and who just before has referred to his own acquaintance with numerous writings of "ancient" men unknown to us even by name, expresses no dissent

from this refutation of "a late innovation." It is sustained by the evidence which has come down to us. That there was the precision of statement which afterwards appears is not claimed. This was the result of a distinctively theological movement, which, whatever else we may think of it, must be recognized as mainly originated and prosecuted out of regard for the traditional faith, and which is inexplicable without it. Neither can it be questioned that in the early time there was a larger freedom of belief than remained after the lines of a religious faith were made more nearly coincident with those of theology. Nor is it disputed that there were individuals and communities that did not join in the common faith. All that we insist upon, as founded in indisputable testimony and capable of being clearly brought to evidence, is that such dissent does not invalidate the claim of those who united in the worship of Christ, and confessed his divinity, to be the bearers of a tradition which associated them with the apostles and with Christ himself, and along which

flowed the original impulse and power of the gospel.[1]

[1] The history of Ebionism, in each of its forms, shows that something essential to the Christian life was lacking in it. Gnosticism changed Christianity from a religious faith to a theosophy. Its secret traditions contrast with the open, public, verifiable tradition to which Irenæus appeals with entire confidence. Some recent historical scholars have found in *The Shepherd of Hermas* a type of Christology, called by them "Adoptionism," which regarded Christ as a man in whom dwelt the Spirit of God, and who was exalted, on account of his preëminent virtue, to sonship and lordship. This does not seem to us to be a correct statement of Hermas's Christology. The flesh, that is, the humanity, of our Lord, in Hermas's theory, is made a partner with the indwelling divine Spirit, who is identified with the preëxisting Son, — the word "Spirit" being used as by Paul in 2 Cor. iii. 17. There are many exegetical objections to an adoptionistic interpretation of *The Shepherd*. [See *Bibliotheca Sacra*, April, 1892, pp. 259–268.] It is contrary also to what must have been the ancient understanding of the book; for even if Clement of Alexandria and Origen, in the breadth of their tolerance, might not have been offended with such a theory, it is not credible that Irenæus and Athanasius could have esteemed *The Shepherd* as they did, if this was its teaching. In any case, however, it

recognizes Christ as exalted to Lordship, as the only Saviour of men, as the Son of God whose name "is great and incomprehensible and sustaineth the whole creation." It may be of service to refer to Bishop Lightfoot's translation [*The Apostolic Fathers*, pp. 405–483], which brings out much more distinctly than the one in the *Ante-Nicene Library* (T. & T. Clark) the use of the phrase τὸ ὄνομα, an important matter for a right understanding of the position assigned to Christ by the author. Bishop Lightfoot's translations, so far as available, are mainly followed in this chapter and the next.

CHAPTER V.

THE EARLY CHURCH (*continued*).

In presenting the foregoing testimonies, especially that given towards the close of the first century by the Roman Church, we have already opened a distinct source of evidence which deserves special attention. We have been scanning the records that have come down to us for expressions of belief. We now examine them for what they may disclose of the Christian life of this early time, in order to ascertain its character and what it can tell us of its origin.

We are impressed at the outset of our inquiry by the fact that those who were living this life regarded it as something distinctive and new. They had come to it through various processes, and out of many schools of thought and religious belief. Christianity stood forth to them in its uniqueness, defi-

nite and almost as palpable as Mount Zion. They could walk about it and tell its towers. The writer of the "Epistle to Diognetus," at the beginning of his response to an inquirer, whom some scholars have conjectured to be the tutor of Marcus Aurelius, characterizes "the religion of the Christians" as "this new kind or way which has entered into men's lives now and not before." [1] The "Epistle of Barnabas" describes Christians as "a new type" (ἄλλον τύπον) of men.[2]

If we endeavor to make distinct to ourselves what this new creation was, we see that it consists, in no small degree, in a reinvigoration of conscience, and in a juster observance of what the ancient world quite generally recognized as right and good. The Decalogue is now written on the heart, the Nicomachæan ethics is reduced to practice, the law is loved.[3] So ancient and inherited religious doctrine becomes a fresh motive to

[1] Καινὸν τοῦτο γένος ἢ ἐπιτήδευμα εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸν βίον νῦν καὶ οὐ πρότερον.

[2] *Barnabas*, vi.

[3] *Ibid.*

piety ; the truth concerning God already known or knowable before Christ came is brought into intimate connection with conduct.

There is also a higher standard of piety, a new ideal of virtue. It appears in Ignatius' exhortation, "Let us learn to live according to Christianity," and in his characterization of Christianity as a thing "of greatness ;" in Clement's rebuke of the Corinthians for not living "according to that which becometh Christ ;" in a method of ethical and religious knowledge by which, if we may apply to it a later phrase, "we cast ourselves into the greatness of Christ ;" [1] and in the noble teaching that a man who has learned to know the Father through the Son "can be an imitator of God." [2]

We notice also, as suggested by the words just cited, a belief that perfect virtue can be attained. There is a consciousness of the beginnings of such excellence, an expectation of its progress, a confidence in its realization,

[1] Clem. Alex., *Strom.* v. 11 ; comp. v. 12, *ad fin.*

[2] *Ep. ad Diog.* ch. x.

which is at least new in its diffusion and buoyant hopefulness. Virtue was not only an obligation, but an inspiration and an enthusiasm ; no longer merely a surpassing ideal, but something that could be achieved. Ignatius praises the Ephesians for "being imitators of God," and says that "faith is the beginning and love is the end" of life, and that where these two are there is God, and "all things else follow in their train unto [a realization of] the beautiful and good (εἰς καλοκαγαθίαν)." [1]

Particular stress is laid upon adherence to the truth, upon purity, upon love to men, emphasized in manifold relations and particularized in many special services ; upon patience and endurance, upon love to God and Christ, and gratitude for redemption and salvation ; upon a confession of Christ in blameless lives, and in deeds of compassion and kindness. Morality is taken up into religion ; religion is carried into every relation and duty of life. There is a unity of life, an anticipated and partially realized completeness and fulfillment

[1] *Eph.* i., xiv.

of it. Perhaps we may best describe what appears in many forms by saying that there is a new and very definite and practical sense of a union of God with man in all his needs and capacities, — his need of forgiveness and recovery from sin, of truth and spiritual life, and his capacity to receive divine gifts, the highest of which is a knowledge of God that explains his own life and makes it divine.

The question now arises, Who is recognized as the author and source of this new and divine life? The inquiry is answered on the pages of this literature with noteworthy distinctness and a remarkable freedom and variety of expression. The definite newness of Christianity, its "singular preëminence," is found, not primarily and mainly in its religious truths and ethical precepts, many of which it inherited from Judaism and paganism, but "in the advent of the Saviour, even our Lord Jesus Christ, and his passion and resurrection," "in the gospel in which the passion has been manifested to us and the resurrection fully accomplished," and which is

"the completion of immortality," the full revelation of eternal life and of the way in which it may be gained. "From that time forward every sorcery and every spell was dissolved, the ignorance of wickedness vanished away, the ancient kingdom was pulled down, when God appeared in the likeness of man unto newness of everlasting life; and that which had been perfected in the counsels of God began to take effect."[1] We are reminded of Irenæus's words respecting Christ's coming: "He brought all [possible] newness bringing himself."[2] Faith in Christ confirms previous revelations, for it is "he himself through the Holy Spirit" that speaks in them.[3] Every religious duty and moral obligation discovered by human reason or enforced by previous divine revelations gains through him a new claim to observance. Men should be humble in view of his condescension, and because "Christ is with them that are lowly of mind;" peaceful and orderly, because they are mem-

[1] Ign. *Phil.* ix.; *Smyrn.* vii.; *Eph.* xix.

[2] *Adv. Haer.* iv. 34, 1. [3] 1 *Clem.* xxii.

bers of his body; temperate, pure, merciful, kindly, because this is a fitting confession of his Name; patient and brave, and not "afraid to depart out of this world," because of his example and promises; possess a steadfast spirit, for this "is Jesus Christ."[1] He is the pattern we are to copy,[2] the sphere of conduct, the source and reality and object of life.[3] Men are called and saved "in Jesus Christ."[4] Christians "live in him," find in him their "true," "inseparable," "never-failing" life. Through him the Father imparts "life and knowledge," "spiritual food and drink and eternal life."[5] His blood "won for the whole world the grace of repentance." Manifested in the flesh and dwelling in men, he fulfills

[1] 1 *Clem.* xvi., xlvi.; 2 *Clem.* iv., v.; *Mart. Polyc.* i., xix.; Ign. *Magn.* xv.

[2] 1 *Clem.* xvi.; Ign. *Eph.* x.; *Phil.* vii.; Polyc. *Phil.* viii., x.

[3] 1 *Clem.* i., xlvii.; Ign. *Eph.* iii., viii.; *Magn.* i.; *Trall.* ii.; *Smyrn.* iv.; *Rom.* v., vi.; *Phil.* xi.

[4] 1 *Clem.* xxxii., xxxviii., xlvi.

[5] *Teaching*, ix., x.

the promise that the stony heart would be taken out of them and a heart of flesh put within them, and through him is the remission of sins in which is created the "new type" of men who "have the soul of children." [1]

What has been said may suffice to show that the life of the early church, as this is revealed in its literature, makes the same impression, as respects its relation to Christ, that is produced by its direct testimony. In both he appears as the object of religious trust and hope and love. What in the one representation he is affirmed to be, in the other he is received as being in a fellowship marked by sincerity, vitality, moral and spiritual fruitfulness.

We have yet other expressions of this same relationship to Christ. The church comes forth from the days of the apostles with usages and rights and sacraments which express its judgment and conviction of the true character of him whose name it bore. It had a day of worship which it called "the Lord's,"

[1] *Barnabas*, v.–vii.

in joyful memory of his resurrection, and in homage to him who in the natural creation separated light from darkness, and in the new creation brought forth life from death. Ignatius's words concerning it are very suggestive as to its import. He says: "If, then, those who had walked in ancient practices attained unto newness of hope, no longer observing sabbaths, but fashioning their lives after the Lord's day, on which our life also arose through him and his death, . . . a mystery whereby we attained unto belief, . . . how shall we be able to live apart from him?" To live "according to the Lord's Day" (κατὰ κυριακήν) was to live in vital union with him who died and rose again. The day is thus a testimony to Christ's religious significance to the early Christians.[1]

Admission to the church was by baptism. Where there had been previous training, through Judaism, in the fundamental faith that there is one God, the Maker and Ruler

[1] Ign. *Magn.* comp. *Barnabas*, xv.; Justin Martyr, *Apol.* i. 67.

of the universe, baptism may at first have been administered simply in the name of Christ, attesting thus what was immediately distinctive and specific in the Christian confession. Very early, however, the formula which is given in the "Teaching" probably became customary. In it the Son is associated with the Father and the Spirit.

With the rite of baptism was connected either implicitly or explicitly from the beginning of the church's history a confession of faith in Jesus as the risen Saviour and Lord. Implicit acknowledgment of this trust appears repeatedly in the earliest record.[1] Probably an explicit baptismal confession is referred to in the first epistle to Timothy: "Thou . . . didst confess the good confession before many witnesses."[2] However this may be, the cus-

[1] See Acts ii. 38, 41; x. 48; xviii. 8; xviii. 24–xix. 7.

[2] 1 Tim. vi. 12. The allusion is to some event of personal rather than official importance to Timothy. This may have been some occasion of special trial, but of this we have no knowledge. It seems to stand imme-

tom of a response to the Name into which the believer was baptized appears to have gained general currency before the middle of the second century, and to have received as respects its contents some degree of growth. The old Roman Creed was a baptismal symbol, and it contains the greater part of what is commonly known as "The Apostles' Creed." Since Caspari's investigations, this Roman Creed is supposed to have been in use at Rome at least as early as the middle of the second century, and probably somewhat earlier. It presents as the object of religious trust and hope one God the Father Almighty, and Jesus Christ his only begotten Son our Lord, and the Holy Spirit.

The epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians[1] refer to Christian hymns, and there is probably a quotation from one of these hymns in the context preceding the allusion

diately connected with the call to eternal life and obedience to it. See Huther, *in loco*, Meyer's *Com.* Auflage 3.

[1] Eph. v. 19; Col. iii. 16.

to them in Ephesians, and another in the first epistle to Timothy.[1] Pliny, in a letter to the Emperor Trajan, says that the Christians of Bithynia "were wont to meet on a stated day before it was light, and sing alternately between themselves to Christ as if to a god."[2] A writer in the first or second quarter of the third century, after referring to authors whose works in some instances are preserved and enable us to verify his statements, adds: "and how many (ὅσοι) psalms and songs written from the beginning by faithful brethren hymn Christ the Word of God, speaking of his divinity."[3]

Doxologies appear early. In one form Christ's mediation is emphasized, as in this prayer from the letter of the Roman Church: "O thou, who alone art able to do these things and things far more exceeding good than these for us, we praise thee, High Priest

[1] 1 Tim. iii. 16.

[2] "Carmenque Christo quasi deo dicere secum invicem."

[3] Euseb. *H. E.* v. 28.

and Guardian of our souls, Jesus Christ, through whom be the glory and the majesty unto thee both now and for all generations and for ever and ever. Amen." Elsewhere in the same letter we find this form: "All these things the great Creator and Sovereign of the universe ordered to be in peace and concord, doing good unto all things, but far beyond the rest unto us who have taken refuge in his compassionate mercies through our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory and the majesty for ever and ever. Amen." It is possible that the remoter antecedent is carried over in thought by the writer, so that the doxology refers to it, and that the same carelessness of construction is elsewhere repeated. In the prayer of Polycarp there is no such uncertainty: "I praise thee, I bless thee, I glorify thee through the eternal and heavenly High-Priest, Jesus Christ, thy beloved Son, through whom to thee with him and the Holy Spirit be glory both now and unto the coming ages." Whether Polycarp used these exact words or not is immaterial to our

purpose. They are given in a letter sent by the church of which he was the bishop, and could not have been deemed foreign to his thought, or that of those who revered his memory. Nor is there evidence of interpolation or corruption of the text such as, of course, is peculiarly liable to occur in connection with liturgical forms. It is, however, sufficient for our purpose to adduce, as indisputably in very early use, doxologies in which Jesus Christ is associated mediatorially with God. Yet there would seem to be no doctrinal reason why those who could employ such forms might not have employed the other type also, and it is probable that they did so. In both passages in the Roman letter, where worship seems to be thus directly addressed to Christ, it is noticeable that the thought of the writer has turned from the general goodness of God to his forgiving and electing love, to his "compassionate mercies," and to the blessedness of those whose sins are covered, so that an ascription of praise to him who manifested this redeeming love and shed his blood for

the salvation of men and gave his life for theirs is especially appropriate.[1]

The preaching in the Christian assemblies in the time before us was, doubtless, unconventional and missionary. Its ventures of thought, beyond the lines of the common tradition of evangelical fact and "the words of the Lord Jesus," were mainly in the line of an allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament whose main design was to glorify the nearest object of the Christian faith, the suffering and glorified Christ.[2] Happily, by a recent discovery, the completion of an ancient homily is recovered, so that its true character is put beyond dispute. Its opening words are these: —

"Brethren, we ought so to think of Jesus Christ as of God, as of the Judge of quick and dead. And we ought not to think mean things (μικρά) of our salvation; for when we think mean things of him, we expect also to receive mean things. . . . And how many mercies[3] do we owe to him. For he

[1] 1 *Clem.* xxi., l., vii. [2] See *Barnabas*, ix., and *passim*.
[3] Ὅσια, "Messianic blessings."

bestowed the light upon us; he spake to us as a father to his sons; he saved us when we were perishing. What praise, then, shall we give to him? . . . we who were maimed in our understanding, and worshiped stocks and stones and gold and silver and bronze, the works of man; and our whole life was nothing else but death. While, then, we were thus wrapped in darkness and oppressed (γέμοντες) with this thick mist in our vision, we recovered our sight, putting off by his will the cloud wherein we were wrapped. For he had mercy on us, and in his compassion saved us, having beheld in us much error and perdition, even when we had no hope of salvation, save that [which came] from him. For he called us when we were not, and from not being he willed us to be." [1]

The culmination of the Christian worship was at the Lord's Supper, and in its observance. It is impossible to explain the extravagant and even materialistic theories of this sacrament, which afterwards became current, without the recognition of an intense faith, at the beginning of the history, in the presence

[1] 2 *Clem.* i.

of Christ with his disciples when they participated in it. A symbolic theory of the bread and the wine long prevailed, but the sacrament itself was not a mere symbol. The divine blessing, even the heavenly good realized in communion with the Father through the Son by the Spirit, the eternal life in Christ, was imparted by him to all his brethren who partook together and in faith of the bread and the wine.[1]

The apostolic benediction, imploring and declaring the favor of God in Christ, "the grace of Christ," was in continued and frequent use.

With these testimonies to the place Christ held in the life and worship of the church should be combined that of martyrdom. The confession of the martyr was: "I am a Christian." It was a testimony to the Name, — a name which was invested by him with divine perfections. It was a testimony unto death,

[1] Ign. *Eph.* xx.; *Phil.* iv.; *Smyrn.* vi.; Justin Martyr, *Apol.* I. lxv., lxvi.; *Dial. c. Tryph.* lxx.; *Didache*, ix., x., xiv.

an act of homage, loyalty, worship. Its religious import, as related to Christ, appears distinctly in the martyr's trust in him as able to keep that which was committed to him, and in his conviction that in his sufferings he was strengthened for endurance, and this not merely through remembrance of his Saviour's passion and through hope of future good, but by an actual impartation of power from a present Christ.

The words, "The Lord stood by me and strengthened me,"[1] are commonly accepted as Paul's own testimony to what he experienced when on trial for his life. At the least they are an expression of what was believed to have been realized in his case, and show the faith of those who accepted them as his. The church of Smyrna, in its letter narrating the martyrdom of its bishop, Polycarp, and those of others of its fellowship, says that they "reached such a pitch of bravery that none of them uttered a cry or a groan, thus showing all that at that hour the martyrs of

[1] 2 Tim. iv. 17.

Christ being tortured were absent from the flesh, or rather that the Lord was standing by and conversing with them."[1] Whatever we may think of the explanation, the conception of Christ implied in it is unmistakable. The churches of Lyons and Vienne, in a circular letter to the churches in Asia and Phrygia, bear similar testimony. "Tyrannical tortures were made of none effect through the patience of the blessed." Blandina, scourged, tortured, inclosed in a net and tossed by a bull, felt "none of the things which were happening to her, on account of her hope and firm hold upon what had been intrusted to her, and her communion with Christ." Those who died were witnesses whom Christ "deemed worthy to be taken up in their confession;" their death, and the release of others who were liberated though steadfast in their loyalty, being determined, it was believed, by Christ's appointment.[2] The author of the "Epistle to Diognetus" says that

[1] *Mart. Polyc.* ii.

[2] Eusebius, *H. E.* v. i. 35, 56; ii. 3.

Christians are the soul of the world; to them is committed the sacred office of loving it and holding it together. This trust has been received by them from one who was sent by the Invisible God, and who was no subaltern nor angel, but "the very Artificer and Creator of the universe," who came "as [a man] unto men." And this, he seems to think, is evident from the martyrdoms the church was offering in testimony of her faith. "Dost thou not see them," he asks, "thrown to wild beasts, that so they may deny the Lord, and yet not overcome? Dost thou not see that the more of them are punished the greater becomes the number of the rest? These things do not seem to be the works of man; these things are the power of God: they are proofs of his presence." Carpus, in the midst of the flames, prayed: "Blessed art thou, Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, because thou didst think me, the sinner, worthy to have this part with thee." And Agathonike, who was standing by and saw the same vision opened to his faith, surrendered herself to the same death, and when

the fire touched her, cried out: "Lord, Lord, Lord, succor me, for to thee have I fled for refuge." [1]

In connection with these indications and proofs that worship was offered to Christ, it is important to notice that it is explicitly disclaimed for any other than a divine being.[2]

Distinct from all the sources of evidence we have thus far enumerated, yet combining them all, is the fact of the Christian society. It was a unique creation. Nothing of the kind had before existed which could produce it, or can account for it. It could bring to perfection other agencies and institutions, — it could not be reduced to them. It had a spirit, a law, a method of its own, and lost its prerogative just in proportion as it parted with its distinc-

[1] *Die Akten des Karpus, des Papylus, und der Agathonike. Eine Urkunde aus der Zeit Marc Aurel's.* Untersucht von Adolf Harnack. Leipzig, 1888. [*Texte und Untersuchungen*, III. Band, Heft 3 u. 4, pp. 451, 453.]

[2] *Mart. Polyc.* xvii.; Justin M. *Apol.* I. xvi., xvii.; comp. 1 *Clem.* lix.; 2 *Clem.* xx.; Hermas, *Mand.* i.

tive excellence. Its spirit was the inspiration which came from Christ, from his teaching and life, from his humiliation and cross and resurrection, from a love in him for men which was believed to be a manifestation and guaranty of the philanthropy of God; its law was his perfection; its method the imitation of his life, — obedience, service, sacrifice like his own. What impresses us is the power, the virtue, that went out from him. There was a new social order, imperfectly realized, yet begun and secure. All religions tend more or less powerfully to association. Other religious founders have been followed, and have pointed out ways of life and salvation. Other leaders of men have been great reformers, and have kindled enthusiasm. Others have been self-denying and benevolent. Jesus Christ, it was believed, though he was Lord of all, died for all. The influence of the death was dependent on the faith in the person. He put his own life into other lives, because his life, while human, was no less divine, so that he was the life of many, because he could be the life of

all ; and the life which was derived from him was so beyond the strength and virtue of those who received it that they attributed it to him, and knew that they could not live without him. To lose personal contact with him and influence from him was to fall to a lower plane of existence, to lose motive and ideal and achievement. And, imperfect as was the church, it was a true beginning of a universal and ideal society. No power could crush it. Its members stood not only the test of martyrdom, but the test of character. The vicious became pure, the weak strong ; the principle of saving the world by loving and blessing it, by praying for it and ministering to it ; the idea of a humanity which is an organism having a head, the archetype of its perfection and capable of bringing it to complete fulfillment, — an organism in which he cares for every member, and the interest of each member is the desire of the whole body, and the whole is the blessing of each ; the power of a faith, a hope, an expectancy reaching on into eternal ages, and sure of an im-

mortal good ; the beginnings of a love mightier than all that separates and divides, and seen to be regnant in the heart of God, — all this was introduced into that confused, perplexed, distracted ancient world in promise and some measure of realization, and it had one and only one conscious source. It was Christ's life put by him, as it was believed, into the lives of men for whom he died, and to whom he opened access to God and the Kingdom of God, and gave the Spirit of God. "The Kingdom of Jesus is on the cross,"[1] men said, and believed it. "All the generations from Adam unto this day have passed away," writes Clement, "but they that by God's grace were perfected in love dwell in the abode of the pious ; and they shall be made manifest in the visitation of the Kingdom of God."[2] "He that hath love," Polycarp declares, referring to "love toward God and Christ and toward our neighbor," "is far from all sin."[3] The dispassionate Clemens Romanus becomes almost fervid in speaking of love : "Let him that hath love in Christ fulfill

[1] *Barnabas*, viii. [2] *Ep.* I. [3] *Ep.* iii.

the commandments of Christ. Who can declare the bond of the love of God? Who is sufficient to tell the majesty of its beauty? The height whereunto love exalteth is unspeakable. Love joineth us unto God; love covereth a multitude of sins; love endureth all things, is long-suffering in all things. There is nothing coarse, nothing arrogant, in love. Love hath no divisions; love maketh no seditions; love doeth all things in concord. In love were all the elect of God made perfect; without love nothing is well pleasing to God; in love the Sovereign took us unto himself; for the love which he hath toward us, Jesus Christ our Lord hath given his blood for us by the will of God, and his flesh for our flesh, and his life for our lives. Ye see, dearly beloved, how great and marvelous a thing is love, and there is no declaring its perfection." [1] Ignatius, on his way to Rome and to martyrdom, felt that he was not "a mere wayfarer," because the churches received him "in the name of Jesus Christ." [2] "How," he asks, "shall we be able

[1] *Ep.* xlix., l. [2] *Rom.* ix.

to live apart from him?"[1] He is "the door of the Father through which Abraham and Isaac and Jacob enter in, and the prophets and the apostles and the whole church; all these things combine in the unity of God."[2] Love "is the blood of Jesus Christ."[3] "Even the heavenly beings and the glory of the angels and the rulers visible and invisible, if they believe not in the blood of Christ, . . . judgment awaiteth them also."[4] "The faithful in love" bear "the stamp of God the Father through Jesus Christ."[5] "It behooves (δεῖ) to save them that are perishing. For this indeed is a great and marvelous work, to establish, not those things which stand, but those which are falling. So also Christ willed to save the things which are perishing."[6] "I know that the Lord journeyed with me on the way of righteousness, and am wholly constrained also myself to this, to love you more than my own soul, for great faith and love dwelleth in you through the hope of the life

[1] *Magn.* ix.
[2] *Phil.* ix.
[3] *Trall.* viii., *Rom.* vii.
[4] *Smyrn.* vi.
[5] *Magn.* v.
[6] 2 *Clem.* ii.

which is his."[1] The prayer of Polycarp, before his martyrdom, it is narrated, remembered "all who at any time had come in his way, small and great, high and low, and all the universal church throughout the world."[2] "And pray ye without ceasing," writes another of the martyrs, "for the rest of mankind . . . that they may find God. Therefore permit them to take lessons at least from your works. Against their outbursts of wrath be ye meek; against their proud words be ye humble; against their errors be ye steadfast in the faith; against their fierceness be ye gentle. And be not zealous to imitate them by requital. Let us show ourselves their brothers by our forbearance; but let us be zealous to be imitators of the Lord."[3] Participation in the eucharist, it was prescribed, should be preceded by reconciliation if there had been estrangement.[4] In the earliest known manual of church polity, the church is not identified with the Kingdom of God, but appears as "a train-

[1] *Barnabas*, i.
[2] *Mart. Polyc.* viii.
[3] Ign. *Eph.* x.
[4] *Didache*, xiv.

ing school for the Kingdom of God."[1] In the earliest recorded prayers, its unity is specially supplicated. It is to be perfected in God's love. All things are made for his name's sake. The prayer which our Lord taught his disciples is a pattern and form for the Christian's thrice-repeated daily devotions.[2] With all imperfection in its interpretation, the petition that God's will should be done on earth as in heaven was in the heart and upon the lips of a society united by a tie that proved to be the strongest social bond that history reveals. And this prayer was offered to the Father revealed in the Son, and in the name of Christ. In its essence the Christian church was a realization of fellowship through Jesus Christ, and, on the basis of his redemption, of men with God and with each other. It was the beginning and pledge of the eternal Kingdom of God. Was it a mere man that brought in this kingdom, or even a man sent as "a subaltern, or angel, or ruler, or one of those that direct

[1] Dr. Schaff, note on *Didache*, ix. 4.

[2] *Didache*, viii., ix., x.

the affairs of earth, or one of those who have been intrusted with the dispensations in heaven?"[1] The writer whose words we have used answers the question by saying that He was the Artificer and Creator of the universe, and will be its judge; and in so replying uttered the universal conviction of those who were carrying the cross to its triumph, and who believed themselves to have received in truth and integrity the words of the Lord Jesus and the testimony of his apostles.

It may be objected to the conclusion we have reached that the early Christian literature often represents Christ as distinct from God and subordinate to him. Such statements, we may suggest in reply, are not inconsistent with the fact of the Incarnation, but naturally arise from it. If the divine nature and life were really expressed through the man Christ Jesus, they must appear under the form and conditions of our humanity. Distinction and subordination are necessary aspects of the revelation which the faith of the early church

[1] *Diognetus*, vii.

accepted as true and real. How it adjusted its belief in Christ to its strict monotheism, this early epistolary literature gives us no suggestion. The question is not raised. It came up afterwards in the writings of the Apologists, and as the church in opposition to Gnosticism developed from its faith and the current philosophies its own *gnosis* or theology. It came up because of the antecedent and continued faith, and in the labor and struggle of thought. The problem is ultimately not one of faith, but of metaphysics. It comes into the sphere of faith only as it affects the sincerity, purity, and truth of its trust. Faith cannot be distracted, — cannot rest in what is foreign to God, and not of his being and life. The heart of the early church rested in Christ, because there it believed that it met and found the very heart of God, met it and found it as nowhere else, and in a fullness adequate to all human need, and forever inexhaustible.

The question now arises, From what source did the early church derive its faith in Christ as God?

It accepted the Jewish Scriptures as a divine revelation, and used them freely in support of its beliefs. Yet it is plain that there was a motive to this searching of these ancient writings which came from another source. The church went to the Scriptures from Christ and because of Christ, as well as to him because of the Scriptures and from them. Besides this source of religious knowledge it had, some time before the middle of the second century, more or less generally in use the substance of our New Testament. When, later still, the Gnostics set up their private traditions, the leaders of the church prescribed tests of tradition, distinguished its written from its oral tradition, and increasingly emphasized the former in proving what our Lord and his apostles had taught and enjoined. But for long, tradition was emphatically the continuous history of the church, its life-blood circulating through its membership, and transmitted from generation to generation. Irenæus speaks of Clement as one who had "the preaching of the apostles ringing

in his ears, and their tradition before his eyes."[1] Whatever of fact may be covered by this rhetorical phraseology, it fittingly describes the relationship of the early Christian literature to its principal source of religious truth. This appears strikingly in Ignatius' method of meeting some opposers: "I have faith in the grace of Jesus Christ, who shall strike off every fetter from you. . . . For I heard certain persons saying, 'If I find it not in the charters [the Old Testament Scriptures], I believe it not in the gospel.' And when I said to them, 'It is written,' they answered me, 'That is the question.' But as for me, my charter is Jesus Christ; the inviolable charter is his cross and his death and his resurrection, and faith through him; wherein I desire to be justified through your prayers."[2] The gospel which was known and accepted was the apostolic preaching, the great facts and events in the life of Jesus Christ, his person and cross, his resurrection, and the life

[1] Irenæus, *Adv. Haer.*, III. iii.

[2] *Phil.* viii.

which had come into men's thoughts and affections and hopes by the "faith through him."

"Through him," — this is the key to the faith and the hope of the early church.

There are two relations of the faith of the early church in Christ, as this appears in its literature, life, worship, sacrifices, social influence and aim, which need to be emphasized with reference to current discussions: —

1. This faith was a fellowship which included all the apostles of Christ, and knew of no disagreement between them as to his person and history.

2. It bears no marks of being the product of a theological evolution, or we should more exactly say revolution, by which a being first known to the churches as only a man was afterwards deified by them.

It is distinctly not a theology, but a life. It holds its truths, not as dogmas, but as motives. It rests in a person, not in propositions. It is not concerned with philosophical questions, but with questions of character and conduct, with men and with God, with

life here and hereafter. So far as in self-defense and in removing obstacles to its progress it is doctrinally polemic, it is in asserting the reality of Christ's humanity.

What most impresses us in the literature which it created is the way in which the truth of Christ's divinity appears not only as impressed upon and involved in the life of the churches, but as a part of their settled tradition. It is used, not defended; presented by implication as the ground of trust, hope, courage, service, devotion to the highest ends, as something involved in being a Christian and in Christian experience. And there is no knowledge of any other Christianity which had come down from the apostles and from Christ.

The writings to which we have mainly referred were composed before the death of Polycarp. Some of them were probably current before, or within a decade of, the death of the Apostle John; all of them not long after. The tradition which they bear and represent goes back far into the apostolic age. The

belief which they reveal in Christ as divine is extensively diffused. It is a part of the established faith in widely separated countries, — in Syria, Asia Minor, Macedonia, Greece, Egypt, Rome. It is the faith of the churches which the apostles planted, and over which they watched. It could not be a new and revolutionary opinion. We are carried back for its origin to the days of the apostles and to their testimonies, which were held to be authoritative. We are brought into connection not only with Paul and John, but with a fellowship of Christians running back to the beginnings of Christianity. If the later literature were itself the expression of a new theological movement, it would reveal this fact. It bears no such stamp, but something wholly different and irreconcilable, — the stamp of a life rooted in an established and inherited faith.

We may go still further. This literature shows no sign of inheriting a tradition born of any merely theological endeavor The church was not a party bearing the name of some

theological leader. There was no church of Paul or of John. What deserves here special attention is, that what is now called the theology of Paul and the theology of Peter and the theology of John does not appear in this literature in any distinctness or completeness. So far, that is, as there are doctrinal types in the apostolic writings which may be distinguished, these types are not reflected with any clearness and perfectness in the writings before us. What we find is the common Christianity of the apostles, the central and fundamental facts and truths rather than the specific differences. Enough of these appear to show some degree of contact and literary dependence, but no such impress of any one apostle as shows that his mind was dominant. This is true even of the individual writers. It is still more marked and manifest in the literature as a whole. Now, if Paul changed the faith of the churches from that taught by the older apostles, then, as against them, he dominated the Christian world as represented in this literature. If he had power to impress

his peculiar type of belief in this one particular, and this so remarkable a feature, why should not his theology as a whole have shaped the thought and life of the churches? But this it did not do. Paulinism as a distinct theology, as a type of belief separable from the faith of the other apostles, was not the faith nor the theology of the churches in the beginning of the second century, nor at any time later in it. Still less was that of John. The churches, therefore, did not derive their faith in Christ from a theological movement begun by Paul or by John, and distinct from and revolutionary of the primitive faith. Their faith struck its roots into the common apostolic teaching about Christ; not into John's doctrine of the Logos distinctively, — no allusion to this is found in the earlier writings, and but one in the seven Ignatian letters, — not into Paul's doctrine of the preëxistent heavenly Man, but into the historic facts of Christ's life and death and resurrection and sending of the Spirit, as these had been believed in from the beginnings of the gospel in the brotherhoods of believers.

A strenuous endeavor is now making to explain the rise of the belief in Christ's divinity by a reflective and theological process which sprung up after his death. His disciples, in order to idealize him, invented or credulously reported stories respecting his miraculous birth. Paul inferred his preëxistence. John, or his disciples, philosophized respecting his being with the Father before the world was created. So the Man of Nazareth became the divine being whom the church worshiped and adored, and made the centre of its religious experience and life. It were nearer the truth to say that out of its life came its belief in Christ's divinity. But neither is this the exact truth. It lived because he was divine, and in its life his divinity manifested itself. Suppose it to be true that John theologized Christ, as before him Paul had done, and with him or before him all the other apostles and the circles of Christians in which survived the traditions of eye-witnesses of Jesus' earthly life, — for the construction of the history which we are for the moment considering

supposes that the theological movement proceeded upon these three independent lines, the origination in certain circles of stories of the miraculous birth, the theological reflections and inferences of the apostle of the Gentiles, who knew nothing of a miraculous conception, and the Alexandrianism of John and his school, — suppose, now, that all this be credited. What then? The question comes up with new power, What was there in Jesus of Nazareth that should dispose disciples of so various types, on so many lines, yet with one accord, thus to glorify him? And how are we to explain the origin of the Christian life which found in him its source and ideal, its indispensable support and its unfailing strength? How, in this atmosphere of illusion, was it sustained from generation to generation, and under the severest tests? How was there created the "new type" of man and the new order of human society? Nor is this all. This faith, held in the beginning, is attended with many difficulties to thought. It has faced these difficulties. It

has made ever-repeated efforts, by this theory and by that, to remove or relieve them. And not wholly without success. Yet again and again the result has shown that the new theory would change the faith, that the faith could not be held in its integrity if thus explained. When such a result has become evident, the theories one by one have disappeared, not the faith. The life of the church is from the life of Christ. It believes, and has always believed, that in him is the Eternal Life, and that he can and does give this life to all who hunger and thirst for righteousness and for God. The divinity of Christ as a doctrine lives not only by apostolic testimony, but in this perpetuated experience.

CHAPTER VI.

REVELATION AND REDEMPTION.

In the preceding chapters it has been shown that the divinity of Christ was generally believed in by the early church, and that divinity of nature was implicit in the consciousness of Jesus himself. The attempt is no longer seriously made to interpret that early belief into lower terms, but it is admitted that the apostles, and the church as a whole, exalted Christ to a place of divine honor, worshiping him as Lord over all, and trusting him as a Divine Redeemer. It has also, as we think, been conclusively shown that Jesus Christ believed himself to be the Son of God, and thus to be the revealer in his own person of the Father to the world. And as to the common faith of the church through the Christian centuries, there can be no difference of opinion, for it has been so tenacious

of the divinity of Christ as to ignore, at times, his true humanity, and to make no real distinction between Deity absolute and Deity incarnate. To-day the crucial question is not as to the belief of the church as a whole, through the ages; not as to the belief of the apostolic church; not even, perhaps, as to the consciousness of Jesus himself. It is a question concerning the reasonableness of belief in the divinity of Christ. Was the moral and religious power, which Jesus undoubtedly had, anything more than a human power, a power which might reside in a great religious genius? Does the fact that his disciples considered this power supernatural require us to account for it in the same way? Would the opinion which Jesus himself may have had, although honestly held, be of necessity a correct opinion? Might he not have had the power, but have been mistaken as to its nature and source? And does the belief of the Christian centuries concerning the person of Jesus Christ, a belief which was easier under partial ignorance of natural law than under

present knowledge of the universal reign of law, make it necessary that we should explain the power of Jesus by a doctrine of supernatural personality? The question is put in these forms because there is a tendency now to separate the teaching and influence of Jesus from any speculative doctrine of his person, because contradictions are said to be involved in the traditional theories of the union of God and man in the historical Jesus, and because, underneath all, is a disposition to discredit the extraordinary, the supernatural, the miraculous, in the revelations God makes of himself to men. The purpose of this and of the following chapter is to show that the work and teaching of Jesus, according to the best apprehension of them to-day, have their value and significance in his divine-human personality, which is the medium, or rather the embodiment, of the light, life, and love of God under human conditions and limitations, and to show that, under changing conceptions of law, miracle, the personality of God, and the personality of man, Jesus may

be known as transmitting, through his person and character, moral power from God to man, and so may be regarded, according to the Scriptural phrase, as the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. If less importance is attached now than formerly to the visible, external manifestations of his power by miracle, that may not hinder, but perhaps rather promote a profounder thought of his truth, his character, his person, as the revelation of the mind and heart of God. For, if his very life and truth do not carry us beyond the human, we need not concern ourselves about miraculous signs and wonders, although, indeed, if his very life and truth do carry us beyond the human, then the health-power which went forth from him in healing, and even a power over nature and a power over death, a power of resuscitation and resurrection, might seem to be only what should be expected. In any case, however, we do well to adopt the order of importance assigned by Jesus to his person and his miracles, and therefore to rank his truth and life above signs and wonders.

We must, therefore, consider first the influences or powers which proceeded from Jesus Christ. We may stand in three points of view from which we see the principal results he has accomplished.

He may first be considered as bringing in a revelation of God. It is the fact, however explained, that he changed the human conception of God. He did not set aside all existing conceptions, for part of the truth men had spelt out from the volumes of nature and of human life, but he revealed the complete truth, he opened the wholeness of the truth. This he did, not by inference of philosophy, nor by a broad view of history. Beliefs gained in that way could be challenged on the same grounds. The currents of history do not all run in one direction. There are suffering, cruelty, caprice, as well as prosperity and happiness. If the word Father crossed the lips of some prophet, the mysterious facts of life and the conflicting movements of history destroyed the incipient hope thus trying to find voice. Jesus revealed the Fatherhood of God.

It has been said that the revelation of God for which the world had been waiting, when it came, proved to be the second word a child learns to speak. That was the revelation. It was at once received within the circle of his disciples, and from them it went forth into the world. Turn from the Old to the New Testament, to the writings of men who had been familiar with the conceptions of the righteousness and majesty of God, and observe the frequency with which the designation of God as Father appears. Conspicuously absent from the old, it is on almost every page of the new Scriptures. It permeates the new faith through and through. Now, only one answer can be given to the question how the belief in God's Fatherhood was created. It came from Jesus, and it was from the life of Jesus rather than from his words. His words were but the expression of his very being as the Son of God. There was the mystery, and also the beauty, there was the attractive, almost the compelling power of the life. His words, his trust, his vision, his judg-

ments upon wrong, his sympathy, his character, his whole life, his very self, were proclamatory of the life of God in him. Those who knew him saw that he was ever coming forth from God. Nobody else knew God as he did. He could say with truth that "no man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him." That word of his, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," was a word of reality. So was that other word, "I and the Father are one." There was the very life of God in him. His consciousness of God was his deepest, his abiding consciousness. All that came to the surface in expression, words spoken, deeds done, endurance of indignities, braving of ignominious death, all welled up out of his consciousness of God the Father living in him, speaking and working through him, shining out in the relation of Fatherhood and Sonship. The Son, he said, can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father doing; for what things soever he doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner. This is how the

realization of God's Fatherhood came to the world. For even now it is almost lost when Jesus is ignored. Witness popular philosophical speculations, the last word of which is agnosticism or avowed pessimism. Nature and history, apart from Christ, leave men in doubt whether there is a God at all, or even lead them to believe in a cruel fate or in chance, under one or other of which things grow from worse to worse. From Jesus came the belief in Fatherhood. He vitalized it, just by being in the world and living out that life of unbroken union with the Father. Looking abroad, we are confused. There are cross lights, cross currents. Looking at him, we see God in the character of love. Looking at the life of others which is reflected from the life of Jesus, we see the Fatherhood of God.

Why is it not enough to accept this truth which Christ gave the world without reference to his life and person, as the truth given by any religious teacher is accepted apart from the person who gave it? But how long would the Fatherhood of God hold its own as a living

faith in this great perplexing world, if it stood merely as a word spoken by somebody, or anybody, centuries ago? It is the sacred life which makes real the sacred truth. Because the life yielded up its secret and disclosed the source of its power, the faith is real, vital, enduring. The first great fact, then, is that God made a new revelation of himself in the historical Jesus. The Fatherhood of God, with all it involves, with the faith and hope it inspires, was given to the beliefs of men as a transforming power in that personality which was rooted in God, and whose life of teaching, service, suffering, and triumph expressed that mysterious relation to the Father which could not be hidden from his friends.

The second point of view is in respect to the influence of Jesus on humanity. He is found to be the producer of a new type, it may almost be said of a new humanity. His work in personal character amounts to a creation. The writings of Paul are largely occupied with a delineation of the new character. Something revolutionary is described. Freedom

has taken the place of bondage to law. Faith has taken the place of servility in a round of observances. Filial trust has taken the place of fear. Peace rules in the heart which is now free from condemnation. The Christian man is in harmony with God, with himself, and with his fellow-men. Paul never loses the joy of the new life of faith and freedom, nor does he seem ever to lose the surprise of it. The great discovery was then and still is a perpetual wonder, ever renewed as the life of faith springs up again and again among those who receive the gospel. Thus there is the Christian character, which is a distinct type, in whatever conditions or nationalities it appears, as crystals may be large or small, burnished or incrusted, but all cleave at the same angles and respond to the same tests. It is a type superior to all others, and not to be superseded by any other, since it combines elements of absolute worth. In any individual the character may be only imperfectly realized, but the ideal which is perceived and embraced is the perfect ideal. In kind, in

type, in principle, the Christian character is perfect and complete. This has been the verdict of every age, and it is the verdict of our own age. Disputes over doctrine, creed, theory, do not disturb the judgment of the world respecting the Christian character. It stands in contrast with the various forms of selfishness which successive periods have produced. It is an ideal commanding admiration in modern as in ancient times, and finding new embodiments in living men and women of faith, of independence, and of self-sacrificing love in every generation. We cannot take space to characterize fully the new type. Our object now is only to designate the work of Christ in the personal life. Whether it appears under Christian nurture, gradually disengaging itself from what is foreign to it, or bursts out with suddenness, almost with violence, throwing off chains of bondage, it is the new, the living, the supreme and perfect type of character. Paul's epistles are by some considered to be doctrinal. They are really ethical. He is absorbed with the thought of

the new type of life, and is doctrinal only to explain how it is produced, what it is, and into what it should develop. His writings retain their hold, not because he is thought to be inspired, nor because he was the first and greatest of the apostles, but because he held up the ideal of renewed character with a vividness, a reality, a sense of never-ending wonder, which are always needed to express the feelings appropriate to the faith struggling up in every age towards that same ideal to embrace and possess it. What produces this life? How is it to be accounted for? There is but one answer. It is inspired by Christ. It is created by Christ. If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creation; old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new. So it was at the outset. He was the source of the new life. There were various explanations then. It was faith; it was obedience; it was imitation; it was discipleship; it was sympathy; it was surrender; it was consecration: but, no matter how described, it was some sort of vital relation with Christ.

He was the original source of the life. He was the vine; believers, the branches. He was the head; believers, the members of his body. No external relation satisfied the conditions of the case. Nor could mere compliance with precepts or unaided imitation of example exhaust the meaning of this relation. Only one word could express the one great fact. That word was *life*, — the commonest, the greatest, the most significant word of Christianity. The life was in Christ. He was the true life. He brought it into the world. He derived it from no other man, from no prophet or teacher. As he said, he had life in himself. And this life reappeared in others. It had that most mysterious but unfailing characteristic of life, reproduction. To this day, the explanation is the same. The Christian is a creation of Christ. The phrase of explanation matters not. Call it teaching, influence, or example; call it sacrifice, redemption, or intercession; enough that the effect, which is unique, and in kind absolute in worth and perfection, can be accounted for

by but one cause. There is a new creation, and the creator, the producer, is Jesus Christ. And whence came that life to which the new life of centuries must be traced? Whence but from God? The new life is the result of the revelation. The new life is the life of sonship with God. And, as we have seen, the revelation was the person. It was Christ's own life in God which revealed God to the world. Some doubt whether a voice was actually heard saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," but such a tradition could never have become current if the whole impression made by Jesus had not been of one who was in the very secrets of God, and who made God real in his every word and act. God was in Christ, revealing himself in such ways that the life of sonship, with its freedom, its faith, its hope, and its love, replacing the old life, old because full of the elements of decay, by the new life, new because ever fresh and strong, was capable of production and reproduction forever.

The third point of view carries us directly

from the individual, renewed and brought into sonship, to the society of the redeemed, or the kingdom of Christ. This kingdom is the natural result of the type of personal character created by Christ. The sons of God are brethren. Christians constitute a great family, or, to use the figure frequently employed by Jesus, a great kingdom. This kingdom, considered as the visible organization of believers, is the Christian church. Considered as the company of all true followers of Christ, it is the society of persons who are bound together in a spiritual unity of love to each other and of service to the world. Considered still more broadly, it is all Christian thought and life which purifies society through literature, art, laws, customs, and education, and which constitutes Christian civilization. It is not necessary to make an analysis of the Christian society or kingdom. If we should trace the principles of liberty, law, and service by which the kingdom of Christ is distinguished from kingdoms or societies resting on superior might and in which the weak are made to serve

the strong, we should be led back to the principles enunciated by Christ in the remarkable passage in the twentieth chapter of Matthew concerning true greatness, and we should see that those principles made their great way in the world, not by mere utterance, but by the life of him who realized them among men, and who could explain them by pointing to his own example, when he said: "Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." In this kingdom Christ is king. He claimed kingship. It was accorded him by his disciples while he lived, and by the church ever since. His kingship is acknowledged in the Epistles by the designation of Christ as Lord, which occurs on almost every page. By that term his spiritual authority was recognized. His word is law. His commands are final. He is to be obeyed and honored. The claims made by Jesus himself are startling. He admitted no conflicting, no superior claim, not even the claim of filial and fraternal affection. Not father nor mother,

nor brother nor sister, is to have a precedent allegiance. Christ's kingship or spiritual authority rests on his revelation of God as Father, and on his power to create the new life of sonship. The kingdom of Christ, carrying with it his kingship, is acknowledged by those who do not accept traditional doctrines of his person. Albert Ritschl, for example, singles out Luther's acknowledgment of the Lordship as expressed in the phrase, *Er ist mein Herr*, as that which embodies all it is necessary to believe concerning Christ. "He is," says Luther, "my Master, my Lord."[1] Thus Jesus Christ claims and exercises a spiritual authority which is supreme, because his teaching had the authority of absolute truth and right, because his life embodied the truth

[1] Ritschl quotes from Luther thus: "Ich glaube nicht allein, dass Jesus Christus wahrhaftiger einiger Gottes Sohn ist, in einer ewigen göttlichen Natur und Wesen von Ewigkeit immer geboren, sondern auch, dass ihm vom Vater alle Dinge unterworfen sind, und er auch nach der Menschheit *mein und aller Dinge ein Herr gesetst sei*, die er mit dem Vater nach der Gottheit geschaffen hat."

and right, and because he is the source of it in all those who accept him as Master and Lord.

Other points of view might have been taken. The perfection of the character of Jesus, that is, his sinlessness, might have been dwelt on, as being wholly exceptional in humanity. But we have chosen rather to consider what the world has received from him as a permanent possession, and, in view of that, to arrive at a belief concerning his person. Although three results have been indicated, they all are one. The revelation of God as Father, the new life of sonship, and the kingdom of those who are the sons of God, are inseparable. The one great fact is, that God and man are brought together in harmony through the power of a life which came directly forth from God and produces the new life in men. However stated, — and we have understated rather than overstated the significance and power of Christianity in the world, — the reality of a life through which God has revealed himself to men, so that they are transformed and restored to their ideal as sons of God,

stands before us as a spiritual magnitude not to be reduced to any small measures, and, as we believe, not to any merely human measures.

Having recognized the kind of work Jesus has done, in revelation, in redemption, and in his kingdom, brief mention may be made of certain theories which are quite inadequate to account for him.

May it not be held that Jesus was a great religious genius, the greatest religious genius history has produced? There have appeared, at various times, men who had what amounted to a passion for religion. They have been men of spiritual insight, of moral purity, and of enthusiasm for truth and for men. Their power of religious conviction has seemed to be less the result of training than an endowment of nature, less the result of study than the directness of intuition, less the product of the times in which they have lived than something innate. They have had a positive genius for religion, as others have a genius for art, or music, or affairs, or the government of men. The names of Paul, Augustine, Luther, Cal-

vin, Savonarola, Wesley, of Moses, Buddha, Mahomet, may be mentioned as examples of religious genius. Such religious characters do help us, in part, to understand Christ. They show that there is a basis in the nature of the person for the peculiar power which has been developed. They are unique by constitution. They are organs, created, as it were, to express and impress religious truth. So we are prepared to believe that distinctive insight and power reside in distinctive persons, and that there is a correspondence, in an approximate accuracy of proportion, between the power exerted and the personality exerting it. What does such correspondence indicate as to the personality of Jesus Christ? In the comparison of other names with his, there is the obvious contrast between derived and original power. The great names in religion are Christian names. Paul, Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Savonarola, Wesley, have merely interpreted Christ. He was the acknowledged source of their faith. Those who knew him best were aware that they knew him only in

part. If the apostles of Christ in the successive ages were unique by endowment of nature, surely the Master through whom the truth was given and in whom it was embodied cannot be ranked among them, or even as the greatest of them, but stands apart, superior, supreme, unlike all others. Before the time of Christ, and independent of Christ, no religious genius has proclaimed truth which can compare with the revelation of Fatherhood, nor introduced a life which creates new character and a new humanity. Moses, even if he established the entire ethical and legal code of the Jewish religion, was a teacher and lawgiver whose system was in part superseded by the gospel and in the other part preparatory to it. No contrast in religions could be more vivid than that expressed in the words, "for the law was given by Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Within Judaism and Christianity, Jesus stands apart from all others, as the reality of his revelation is greater than the anticipations of it, the originator greater than the interpreter. And as to other reli-

gions, if the account we have given of the gospel is correct, it is evident that the religious teachers of India and China gave to the world nothing comparable with that gospel. On the contrary, by rules of asceticism, by requirements of self-mortification, by representations of the vanity and emptiness of life, by the teaching that personal extinction is better than perpetual existence, they deepened the sense of a need which Christ supplies. The Oriental religions are as truly preparatory for Christianity as Judaism was. The resemblances between the history of Jesus and of Buddha, or between their teachings, are accidental or incidental. The differences are radical. And so, when it is said that Jesus was a great religious genius, there need be no denial. But as every religious genius is endowed with gifts corresponding to his influence, it is natural to infer that he who brought in through his very life the wisdom of God and the power of God to create a new humanity, is of a nature corresponding, and is not to be reduced into any class which at the best consists only of his prophets and interpreters.

A certain phrase has been employed which, while professing to explain Jesus, fails to explain him. It is said Jesus was an inspired man, that the spirit was given to him without measure, that he was inspired as no other man has been. But that is to say, only, that he had religious insight and power which are unparalleled, and that he had them by direct inspiration from God. If he was inspired to give such a revelation as has been described, he was a human being exerting a divine power, which is another way of saying that God was in him, or that he was divine. If he was an organ perfectly adapted to reveal God, it must be asked who and what is the organ through which God can reveal his true character, and in such way that he is himself the life which can be reproduced in others to create a new humanity. The man is not one thing, and the inspiration another thing added to the man, and which might again be subtracted from him.

The theory that Jesus was a superhuman but a created being, intermediate between God and man, presents more difficulties than

it removes. It has all the disadvantage which pertains to a belief in the supernatural and miraculous; it presents an incomprehensible being, half angel, half man; and it does not correspond with the truth and life brought into the world by Jesus. God in Christ reconciling men to himself is the substance of the gospel. If credulity can go so far as to believe in a superhuman being, and can thus transcend the observed law of nature and humanity, it may as easily believe that Christ was the eternal Son of God. It is much more reasonable to believe that the very life and love of God are revealed in Christ's person than to believe that God sent down some created being other than himself, and inferior to himself, to live among men in human form so as to reveal the Fatherhood of God and to restore men to sonship.

We have now reached the parting of the ways. With those who fail to find in the truth Jesus taught and the work he did anything more than human nature is capable of, who fail to find in him a revelation from God such

as we have attempted to describe, who not only disbelieve miracle and resurrection, but also any divine revelation or redemption in the truth and life embodied in Jesus, we enter into no debate. If our view of the nature of Christ's teaching and work is not adopted, no occasion exists for a doctrine of his person as divine. For it is on the opinion held concerning his work in the world that the opinion concerning his person must depend. If his work is merely a human work, he is merely a human person. If his work is a divine work, he is more than a human person. Our inquiry has followed the direction taken in the New Testament. Christ is first known as the revealer of the Father, as the redeemer and restorer of men to sonship, and as the founder of that kingdom which is a new humanity; and therefore it is believed that he is the eternal Son of the Father, that he is Lord and Master over all things for the believer and for the church, and that he is to be adored as divine. First the redemption, then a doctrine of the redeemer. It would be profitless to contend for his divinity with those who do not

so understand his work. Nor can we present additional arguments, to those who may not be convinced, to show that his work is such a work of revelation and moral creation. The appeal is to experience and to history. If experience does not imply that work, if history is not read in that light, and if the faith of the church from the outset is thought to be one grand mistake, we can make no other appeal. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned. But with those who estimate the work of Christ substantially as we have regarded it, we would confer still further with respect to the person who has brought the revelation and realized the redemption. We hold the divinity of Christ to be a reasonable doctrine. We hold it to be a necessary doctrine, — necessary, that is, not to salvation, but as alone corresponding to all the facts of personal experience, of history, of the faith of the church, and of the very consciousness of Jesus. In what follows we shall adduce some considerations which confirm the reasonableness of the doctrine, we shall attempt to show that it involves no contradictions or absurdities, and we shall try

to indicate how far it is possible to go, as well as where it is necessary to desist, in statement and definition of the doctrine. No reader will suppose for a moment that we consider it necessary to a living faith in Christ that any particular theory or doctrine of his person should be accepted. The disciple of Jesus may trust him as Redeemer, and adore him as Lord, without affirming, or being able to affirm, anything more than that he is Lord and Master. Enough to say with Luther, "Er ist mein Herr;" enough with the apostles to receive Jesus as Lord. Yet many who have such a trust cannot stop with that, but must inquire farther; and some are shaken in their trust because the doctrines of the divinity of Christ and of the Trinity seem perplexing and contradictory; and others do not know how to meet the attacks which are made on their own faith and on the faith of the church at those points. It is for the sake of such thoughtful inquiry that we shall go on in another chapter to consider the doctrine of the divinity of Christ as corresponding to his work in revelation and redemption.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DIVINE-HUMAN PERSONALITY.

From the revelation of Fatherhood, the redemption into sonship, and the kingdom of God, thought proceeds to the person who reveals, redeems, and rules. The revelation is the Fatherhood of God. The redemption is into sonship with God. The kingdom is the kingdom of heaven, or of God. The work of Christ is a divine work. Is he divine? Is belief in the divinity of Christ a reasonable belief? Is it a necessary inference from the truth he has revealed and the life he has produced?

The facts to which attention may first be directed are the reality of revelation in nature and in humanity, and the ascending order of the revelations. The argument from these facts is, that the culmination is reached in Christ, who completes the partial and pro-

phetic revelations embodied in the universe and in history.

Nature is a revelation of God. Phenomena are the manifestation of energy or force. The last and most satisfying word concerning force is that it is from the will of God. Otherwise it is wholly mysterious and unexplained. The thought which is expressed in nature, in its laws, its mathematical order, its progressive evolution, is the outshining of reason, that is, of the thought of God. Nature embodies the divine power and wisdom. Assuming this to be the correct interpretation of nature, it is seen that nature and God are not separated. Mechanical analogies are no longer considered appropriate. The universe is not a machine with self-acting powers, created long ago by God, but now external to Him. The analogies of organism are more satisfactory, — God is in his world as its power, its life, its idea. Pantheism, which confounds God and nature, is not so far from the truth as Deism, which regards God and nature as mutually exclusive. Nature, then, considered as revealing God, is

seen to be a revelation in concrete embodiment. It is a reality for the indwelling of God. It is, indeed, a reality at all only because it is the indwelling of God. In Him it lives and moves and has its being. These are the commonly accepted conclusions of all who believe that a God exists. And further, nature, including vegetable and animal life, is an ascending order. There has been repetition and even retrogression. But, on the whole, the movement has been so distinctly progressive that the process is recognized and characterized as evolution. It is impossible not to classify mineralogical, botanical, and zoölogical phenomena as lower and higher. The universe as a whole has never come around to its starting place, nor ever will. The wheels of nature do, it is true, repeat their revolutions in days and seasons ; but like the wheels of a carriage, turning around and around, yet bearing one onward to his destination, the wheels of the universe go ever forward. The movement might be likened to that of an ascending spiral.

Humanity is a revelation of God. The intellectual and moral powers of man reveal as well as recognize absolute truth and right. Society, as it advances along the path of civilization, realizes a purpose which is not of its own origination, but which is the ideal corresponding to its inherent constitution. Indeed, the belief in God rests on the reason and conscience of man and on the history of the race even more closely than on the design and order of the physical universe. The mode of revelation in humanity is also an embodiment. Not what is superimposed upon humanity as that which is additional to it, but humanity itself, is the revelation. Truth and right could not be made known *to* man unless truth and right were *in* man. The pattern is not painted on the cloth, but is woven into it. To destroy the pattern is to destroy the fabric. The revelation is in and through humanity. It is higher, also, than the embodiment of God in nature. The ascending order is unmistakable. In the past, the succession through nature to man has been from lower to higher.

In the scale of importance, as the world is at present, man is superior, standing highest among all contemporaneous orders. If it is believed that God is revealed in nature and in humanity, it is evident that the method is by concrete embodiment and by an ascending order.

Is humanity, as it is and has been, the culmination? By analogy, it is quite conceivable that there should be a further advance. There is no necessary reason for supposing that man is the crown of creation. There might be, perhaps, a new species organically related to man, as man is organically related to some orders below himself. In fact, it is most reasonable to expect some advance on the existing order. Humanity is incomplete and imperfect. There is a consciousness within of limitations. The ideal is not realized. It may even be said that the whole physical creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, waiting for man's complete knowledge and utilization of its powers which as yet he has discovered only

in part, waiting for the revealing of the sons of God. Institutions of family and government, which are divine creations, at present only foreshadow those perfect forms which are to come. What more probable, then, than that God should make some higher revelation, which, like the others, is in concrete form, and through which powers will come in to bring to completion that which otherwise remains imperfect? Why may He not reveal himself in a personality who is at the same time the ideal of humanity and the power within it by which it may be brought to its perfection? There might be an organ of revelation, vitally related to the humanity which is to be perfected, yet not merely the consummate flower of a natural evolution, such as others also may become, but an organ through which God comes to men in grace and love, a new moral power introduced to bring humanity to its completion. No one in advance would be able to foresee what the higher revelation would be, as no one, knowing only the lower orders of animals, could

have foreseen what would follow in man, although, looking backward after man has appeared, certain resemblances and anticipations can be recognized. But the incompleteness of humanity was known and felt before Christ came. How the need would be satisfied, only the actual revelation of truth and love could show. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews followed this line of thought. He referred to the promise that all things should be put in subjection to man, and admitted that mankind does not have universal dominion. Then he declared that in Jesus humanity will realize the supremacy for which it is intended. Through the law of sacrifice Jesus himself gained a supreme power and endows men with power. Looking on man as he is, we see not yet all things put in subjection under him, but we behold him, who hath been made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God he should taste death for every man. It is the fact that in Christ a higher

power came into humanity for its renovation and perfection. It may be, then, that he was above mankind in his mode of existence, yet organically related to the humanity which he transcends, and that in him the revelation of God completes that which in nature and human life remained incomplete.

It is assumed in the entire discussion that there has been that which is unusual, exceptional, extraordinary in Christianity, that it is a new and higher revelation of God. On this assumption, which was established in the preceding chapter, we are attempting to understand, in some measure, the historical person through whom this revelation and new life have been given to the world. Jesus Christ may be best understood as revealing the ethical qualities of God, as an embodiment of the character of God. It was his declared object to make known the divine grace, mercy, righteousness, and love. The revelation was moral and spiritual rather than metaphysical. If God would make known his true character to men, it might be expected that,

like all his revelations, this also would be in some embodiment, in some concrete reality, and therefore in a personality, in a life. No other way is conceivable to us in which character can be known but in a personal life. Therefore the mode in which God can reveal his character to us would seem, of necessity, to be under some of the conditions and limitations of human nature. It may be that there is no other way in which his character could even be made intelligible to us except in a human embodiment. Some one may ask why it could not be spelled out on the sky in letters of light that God is love, or God is our Father, so that there could be no mistake. But that might be impossible, for an arrangement of the planets or stars which would spell out words to one observer on this side of the earth would appear differently to another observer on the other side of the earth, even if one language were universally understood. And even if it were possible for all men to read sentences on the face of the heavens, how could the meaning of the words be known? There

must first have been the experience of love in human relations. There must have been the revelation of fatherhood, the actual life of parent and child, of friend and friend, in order that the words should declare anything plainly concerning God. Then the affections of human life are so imperfect at the best, they are so vitiated by selfishness, that words on the sky would have a meaning in correspondence with the actual experience of earthly loves. Such words could have the meaning we really do find in them by reason of the life of Jesus more than from any other cause. That life of sonship was the revelation to the world of the very heart of God as the eternal Father. Now that it has been lived, words on the sky, or in a book, or on the lips, can be understood. So it would seem, after all, not even to be a question which is the better way, whether God should declare himself in some external way in words not to be mistaken, or in Jesus Christ. It may rather be questioned whether He can reveal his character of love and right in any way but in a life which embodies his

character. Nature has perhaps revealed all of which it is capable. The revelation of love cannot be made in visible physical nature. And the disclosures it does make are better than mere words. The beauty, order, and grandeur of nature show the glory of God in such a manner that we can conceive no statement which would be anything more than a feeble reminder of that which the eyes have rested on. So humanity, through the constitution of persons and through the history of men, could perhaps reveal God only in a limited degree. The reality of the character of God as grace and love gains no sufficient expression in human life, because that life must be interpreted as it is, with all the doubts it awakens concerning the goodness of God, and with all its selfishness. No statement of prophet or sage, whatever authority he might claim, could give an understanding of the character of God, so long as there was only poor, incomplete, aspiring, disturbed human life to illustrate the words. Therefore it may be believed that the real character of

God can be known to us only by some embodiment which is the complete, unconfused expression of his love, such an embodiment as the person, example, and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of the Father. After such a revelation is made, no proclamation in words, no startling manifestations in nature, could compare for a moment in meaning or in power with such incarnation of the character of God.

When also it is perceived that God and man are akin in respect to reason, to righteousness, and to affection, that every man is made in the image of God, it is credible and even probable that God should reveal his true character in a human personality. Man, as the saying of Luther and other reformers ran, is capable of God; *capax Dei.* He is able to apprehend God as the absolute reason and power, although his knowledge is mingled with error. In other ways God is real to man. There is no reason to suppose that any other living beings on the earth have the power to perceive God. Man alone has affinity for God.

There is no better thought of man's perfection than that he acts in conscious harmony with the will of God. The organ of God's best manifestation of his love might therefore be found in humanity itself. The point of contact, of sympathetic union, is presented there, and, so far as can be seen, in respect of character, is presented nowhere else. If nature reveals God, affording conditions favorable to the expression of his greatness and wisdom, so far forth there is a kinship between God and nature. It is not separate from Him, nor exclusive of Him, but is open at every point, in every atom, to his indwelling. Nature could not be understood at all, nor conceived as existing, apart from God, as in some respects God could not be understood apart from visible nature. With humanity He is more closely akin. Man is not merely made in the image of God; he can think and know only because the absolute truth gives law and relation to all reality; he can know and love the right only because he is in a moral system patterned after an ideal of absolute right

which has absolute authority. Such kinship between man and God constitutes human nature the most fitting organ for the embodiment, the incarnation, of the divine grace and love which are necessary to make men the children of God. If God does reveal himself at all, if divinity appears in nature and history, if, indeed, it is believed that God exists, what more probable than that He should make known his character through a personality which is human, real, visible, organically related with man, and yet the semi-transparent medium which reveals the divine compassion and love, while it partly conceals the mystery of his absolute life.

The real difficulty lies farther back than the manifestation of God in Christ. It lies at the point of knowing God at all. How can God be known? How can the finite mind know the infinite and absolute reason? How is it possible to conceive the perfect wisdom, the infinite power, the omniscience, the omnipresence, the eternity, the self-existence, the personality of God? But when the belief in God

exists, when He is seen in all law, in all beauty, in all the necessities of reasoning, in every mandate of conscience, and in the progress of history, when it is believed that at every moment we live and move and have our being in the absolute God, it is then no strain put upon faith, nor indeed upon reason, to believe that in the fullness of time one appeared who, in a special manner, brought the life of God into the life of man for the purification and perfection of humanity.

Thus far the ascending order of existence and the nearness of humanity to God have been considered as making probable the perfection of that which is incomplete, and the manifestation of the character of God in its fullness of love through a human incarnation. In general, the movement of thought has been from below upward, from lower to higher. The attempt may now be made to begin with the thought of God, as He is moved with love for men, and to inquire how He can come down to them, or how He can reveal himself to them so that they shall know Him in his real charac-

ter of love. The fact that such a supposition can be made of course implies that He has already made himself known in some measure. The question how God can reveal himself could not even be asked unless He had already done so, for it would not be known that there is a God to be revealed. But with the knowledge that He is absolute how may we suppose that He will reveal himself in his moral disposition and purpose? Certainly, under some conditions and limitations which are called finite. On the whole, a human personality has the fewest limitations, for, as we have already seen, it is most nearly akin to God. It also has a power of self-direction or of freedom not found in other beings. God will reveal himself in a human person. Then some man will say, How can the absolute God reveal himself in a finite man? how can two opposites be united? how can God, who is unlimited and unconditioned, become man, who is limited and conditioned? is not such a union a self-contradiction? Yet it is through media which are called finite that He makes all his revela-

tions. As compared with God nature is finite; yet God is in nature, and is known as God through such concrete embodiment. As compared with God, the human species is finite; yet it is in the constitution of mankind and in its history that God reveals himself. God does come down into that which is called finite, and through it transmits the knowledge of himself, so that He is known as absolute, and is distinguished from the finite and temporal which catches and reflects his image. It is by finite minds that God is known. If the distinction between finite and infinite means anything, and if the infinite is revealed through the finite and to the finite in nature and in man, the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, a human personality, or the union of God with him, is only like all God's revelations, the infinite manifested through the finite, the absolute through the human and historical. It is needless to set up these contrasts, for nothing that we measure off by itself and call finite is really separate from God, but is derived from Him, is dependent on

Him, is an expression of Him. And somehow, through these living connections, the mind of man has knowledge of the source of all the truth he sees, and of all the life he touches, as absolute and underived. How God comes down, as it is termed, into the finite, cannot be known, but He does in some way, through his works, give the knowledge of his absolute being to men. And if God lives in nature so that He can be known there, if He reveals himself in and to the reason and conscience of man, much more, it is easy to believe, could He reveal himself through, or unite himself to, or live in, that person who is confessed to be the best, the holiest, the most akin to God of all the men who have ever lived. The belief concerning Jesus is not that God in all his absoluteness, omniscience, and omnipotence took on the form of a man and walked about among men in Galilee, so that Jesus knew all occurrences on earth and through the universe, and was conscious that he created the stars, and knew more not only than the ancients, but more than the moderns, of science and

philosophy, but it is the belief that God was in Christ, so far as God can manifest his life in a human personality at a given period in history, and for the purpose of bringing in his grace and love for the renewal and perfection of men. Such an embodiment of God, like every revelation of Him, leaves very much mysterious as to mode and limitations, the broader light giving more depth and extent to the all-surrounding darkness. But the revelation of God in Christ pertains less to his absoluteness than to his character. It is the love of God which is made known in Jesus Christ. The fitness of personality to express love is unquestioned. The capability of a man to realize sonship is undoubted. That which is highest in the possibilities of human nature is the ethical. In respect to character, there is an affinity between God and man, so that God might be able in no other way so well to reveal his own character at all, and certainly not in such way that it should be understood by man, as in a pure and perfect personality. These considerations respecting the revela-

tion of the absolute to and in the finite show at least the possibility of a divine revelation in the person of Jesus Christ. There certainly is no absurdity or contradiction in the belief, since, if God would reveal his character at all, no other mode can be conceived except some finite and historical manifestation. The possibility easily passes into the probability that God was in Christ as a revelation or incarnation, in view of the human need of knowing God's Fatherhood, and in view of the significance of the truth and the power of the life Jesus actually gave to the world. The admission that such a revelation would be exceptional and extraordinary is matched by the fact that the truth and motive power which actually came from Christ *are* exceptional and extraordinary, so exceptional that, as we observed in the preceding article, the explanation of Jesus as a religious genius or an inspired man is inadequate to account for him.

In keeping with the divine-human personality of Jesus is his power to work miracles. These were not mere wonders, but deeds of

beneficence. His power of instantaneous healing seems to have been inherent. It has been aptly called his health-power. The healing influence of a healthy person over a diseased person has had many illustrations, and at the present time is recognized, as it never has been before, as the exercise of a real power which is but little understood. Such a power Jesus had to the fullest degree. That which is vaguely suggested by modern mind cure, faith cure, or even, possibly, by hypnotic and mesmeric influence, was complete in Jesus. It is much more probable that he had such a health-power over bodies and minds than that the narrative of his healings is a pure fabrication, or an unfounded tradition. It was a real power he had to restore those who were supposed to be under demoniacal possession, whatever form of mental disease and hallucination or of moral insanity that may have been. Even his resurrection and ascension, although the visible form of his glorified person may not be understood, and certainly is not important, are the credible and indeed natural consum-

mation of his life and work. If one has overcome the difficulty of belief in personal immortality, and holds it as true that the individual survives death, why should it be incredible that Jesus survived death, and gave some crowning proof of the victory in keeping with the divine life which preceded his crucifixion? The process of restoration from death, or rather of transition through death into the deathless life, might, in the case of a person so unique, so free from the debasements of sin, so divine, be more rapid than it is in others. In view of the purpose of the whole revelation in him to redeem from sin and to bestow the gift of eternal life, such manifestation of the glorified person might be necessary. The emphasis lies not so much on the resurrection as a proof of the divinity, but rather on the divinity, on the unique person, and on his unique work, as a proof of the resurrection, while the marvelous results of belief in the resurrection go far to prove both the fact itself, and also the divineness of the person who thus overcame the power of death. Here

also the question could be asked, how, if God would convince men of the reality of life beyond death, he could do it more surely than through that resurrection which abolished death. The power of Jesus over physical nature, as shown in the stilling of the tempest, the multiplying of the loaves, the draught of fishes, is not as intelligible to us, especially the creation of loaves of bread. If these miracles stood alone, we might be incredulous. But he who had such power over men, over mind and body, even after death, may have been aware at times of a control over nature which was unusual. If he was more than human, if he embodied the character of God so as to bring in a new revelation, it would be hazardous to mark a line beyond which his power could not be exercised, and especially to make such boundary coincide with the limits of facts which can be made clearly intelligible to us. The nature-miracles are very few, and are not important to an adequate knowledge of his person, his teachings, and his kingdom. And as to all the mira-

cles, the remark made in the preceding chapter may be repeated, that they are secondary in importance to the life and teachings of the divine person, even as he himself insisted, and are to be understood, not chiefly as proofs that he is divine, but as exercises of a beneficence in keeping with his whole redeeming work. The doubts which might arise, if such powers were ascribed to any one, disappear when it is remembered that they belonged to one who in his very person and life actually gave a new revelation of God, produced a new type of character, and created a new humanity.

As to any more definite theory of the person of Christ, of the mode of the union of divine and human in him, it is not to be considered of essential importance. So long as a special revelation or embodiment of God in him is seen to involve no contradiction or absurdity, but to be in accordance with the other revelations of God, all of which are through finite media, and so long as he is regarded as Redeemer and King, it is not necessary to adopt any particular theory, or

what might be called psychology, of the divine-human person. Suspicion would be thrown on any theory which leaves nothing unexplained. To reduce all to definitions would be, not to perceive the absolute by means of the finite, but to do away with the absolute by substituting for it a somewhat enlarged finite.

There are, however, two truths which have the most important bearing on the divinity of Christ, both of which find frequent expression in the New Testament. One is, the truth that God reveals himself. The absolute has, as a characteristic, a power, a mode of being, this, that He communicates and reveals himself to finite intelligences. This revealing principle or power is called the Word, which, as John says, was from the beginning with God, and was God. It is the doctrine of the Logos. It was the Word or the Logos through which the worlds were created, those revelations of God which have no speech nor language, whose voice is not heard, but whose sound has gone forth into all the world, and their lines to the ends of the earth, declaring in their silent

revolutions the glory of God, and in their obedience to law showing his handiwork. Christ is the highest revelation of God, bringing in the absolute love and goodness. In him the revealing principle finds its best, and, it may be, its complete expression. With him the Word or the Logos is especially identified. All the lower revelations were foreshadowings of the highest, pointing to it, and preparing the way for it, and were expressions of the revealing Word, all disclosing one purpose and emanating from one mind. The same Word or Logos which made possible the existence of the worlds, and which was concerned in the history of the chosen people and of all peoples, was manifested in Jesus Christ, in whom the Word became flesh. The revelation is one; the purpose is one; the higher includes the lower. This view of the progressive revelation of God from power to righteousness, and from righteousness to love, is in agreement with what has already been indicated of the ascending order of revelation in nature, in history, in Christ. It is a view

comprehensive of that increasing purpose which through the ages runs. It is a view raising thought above any narrow outlook on the material world, on the separate nations, or on Jesus of Nazareth, into a broad survey of the sublime scope of the divine purpose. Several books of the New Testament begin with this truth of revelation advancing from the creation of the world to the incarnation. Paul in the Epistle to the Colossians, John in the Fourth Gospel, and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews associate the very existence of the universe with redemption through Christ, boldly declaring that the world was created in and through and unto the Word or the Son, and subsists, is held together, in him who, as realizing its ends, is vitally related to its very existence. If, now, some one propounds curious, puzzling questions, as to how the Logos could be in Jesus Christ as an infant at Bethlehem, or as a man in Capernaum, and at the same time sustain the worlds, or how the Logos, in whom all things consist, could be reduced to the limi-

tations of the Jesus of history, it might not be easy to answer, nor perhaps worth while to answer. It is the old question, how the absolute can be in the finite and still be the absolute, how there can be any before and after, or any here and there, with God. But as an inspiring thought of God's disposition and power to be known, of the ascending scale of those revelations which are an unbroken unity, and of the consummation and perfection of them all in Jesus Christ who shows the Father to the world in his character of love, it opens not only the possibility but the reality of a union in Jesus Christ of divine with human, so that in him is the complete embodiment of the character of God.

The other truth, which everywhere pervades and distinguishes the New Testament writings, is that this revelation consists in the Sonship of Jesus Christ. It is his very character, or, it might be said, his very nature, to be the Son of the Eternal Father. Men were impressed, and the world has been impressed, with the perfect harmony with God

of one whose life was the life of sonship. That life was perfect because it revealed in every act and word the relation of sonship. He did not struggle up into this by self-denials and repentings, but he was in the completeness of sonship from the beginning. Those who came under the influence of Jesus saw before very long that the sonship was not a fleeting condition of a few years in a sorrowful human life, but that it was of an eternal quality. Putting all things together, the history, the revelation, the redemption, the kingdom, it was seen that the thing revealed on earth was a thing of the heavens, a thing which had always been and would ever be, that sonship and fatherhood are of the very being of God, that God is best known as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that it was eternal sonship which had found a way to be embodied in human life where it could be mirrored in visible form. The thought was not of before and after, but of that which is eternal, of what God is in his very character and heart. Sonship is human, but also son-

ship is divine. The revelation was fatherhood, and was made in the person of him who was the Son of God. This disclosure of God satisfies both the heart and the intellect. It satisfies the heart, because it reveals the heart of God as by his very being eternally sustaining the relation of fatherhood and sonship. His is not an isolated, unrelated, unloving existence. The Son is ever in the bosom of the Father. It satisfies the intellect, helping in the understanding of incarnation. The ethical value of the relation of Father and Son in God is absolute, and yet it implies a certain dependence and even limitation, a subjection in obedience and trust, a power of surrender even through sacrifice, in order to fulfill the purpose of God in redemption. The Sonship is eternal. Earthly fatherhood and sonship are a transcript of the divine pattern. Every family or fatherhood in heaven and earth is named after Him who was the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. And yet it is a relation which could be realized in human historical conditions.

Such revelation of fatherhood and sonship as eternal discloses in a measure the divine nature. God is not one individual of a species, nor one solitary individual constituting a species which has no other members, nor a simple unity which is a single object perfectly defined and understood. The depths of Absolute Being which cannot by any soundings of finite minds be fathomed, but on whose bosom all other existences are borne up, are most truly made known to us, not in terms of logic, but in terms of life and motive. And the life which is manifested is the life of fatherhood and sonship which is eternal. What was revealed in the human earthly life of Jesus Christ corresponds to a relation in the very nature of God. And now God is conceived by us as having a life in relation, in a kind of contrast, and in affection. Thought is not lost in the undefined, the illimitable, the infinite, but fastens on that which is real as a related and various life in God himself. That which can be symbolized in a human life, so as to make God warm to our feelings, is the

reality of his being. God exists eternally in the mutual life of Father and Son.

The Son of God was an historical person, representative of God in an earthly life which began and ended. The energizing of God within us, to purify from evil and to make us harmoniously responsive to his will in all our life, is requisite, that the revelation in Christ may have its full power. The act, or, it may rather be said, the action of God is symbolized or represented to us by an image of that which is internal and invisible, the very quality of life, the breath or spirit. Under the advantage of the truth about God which Christ embodied, the divine Spirit vitalizes the relation between God and man. His influence is moral and spiritual. He energizes in intimate correspondence with the reality of fatherhood and sonship as revealed in Christ. Thus the revelation is not merely that which has occurred, and may now in part be remembered or known by the record of it. It is continuous. It is fruitful. Christ revealing, redeeming, ruling, is ever present. The energy of

the Spirit is so closely conditioned on the personality and work of Christ that the Son and the Spirit are spoken of interchangeably as to their presence, their indwelling, their renewing and sanctifying power. The promise of the Spirit was a characteristic of Christ's teaching. It was awaited by his disciples. The new life springing up with freshness was believed to be the fulfillment of the promise. Only the invisible energy of God, the very life of God within, could produce such newness of life in sinful men. The association of the work of the Spirit with the work of Christ signified essential relation, eternal relation. Christ procures the Spirit which proceeds from the Father. He procures it, not by asking as in a prayer, but by attaching himself in his sonship, by means of sympathies and compassions, with humanity, thus opening a way congenial to the influence of the renewing and sanctifying Spirit of God. The coöperation in human redemption and perfection of Father, Son, and Spirit signifies a life in God himself answering to the work. The God,

who as the absolute would be shrouded in impenetrable mystery, is known in a relation which may be likened to our own dearest affections, and is thus perceived to be the God of personal life and love from all eternity.

The value of this knowledge of God is not in what it signifies metaphysically of the mode of his being, but in what it conveys of the character of God in fatherhood and sonship, and in his disposition of love energizing actively through his Spirit to bring his love to full effect, so that God need no longer be thought of as a mysterious somewhat on whom the universe depends, yet baffling all attempts to know Him, but as the God of feeling, of warmth and glow, of self-communication, of love. Yet, as throwing light on the mode of his being, the revelation of Father, Son, and Spirit may be held to remove rather than to create difficulties. For, apart from such knowledge of God, it is by no means easy to comprehend Him as personality at all. The absolute is reason, yet can have no processes of reasoning like ours, since all truth

must be immediate to Him. The absolute is will, since energy goes forth constantly from Him, yet can have no freedom of choosing, for there can be but one universal, all-inclusive exercise of force. God becomes merely a name for the Power which energizes in all phenomena, or for the Unknowable, or indeed just for the universe itself, and so personality is lost. Or, if personality is affirmed of the absolute, and yet He is thought to be free from all distinctions and relations, there is either a mere juggling with words, or the personality is a finite conception, a magnified man, supposed to be infinite. But the threeness may help thought in conceiving the personality of God. For, whatever kinship of reason, affection, and will there may be between human and divine, there is forevermore the difference between derived and original, finite and infinite, so that personality in us cannot be the measure of personality in the absolute. There must be more in that personality than an enlarged copy of the personality of one individual of the human species.

Furthermore, our personality is not complete in an individual, but includes the social relation. The individual is what he is as a person by virtue of the organism from which he originated, on which he is constantly dependent, to which he is vitally related. The corporate life of men has a personal character, the nation being looked on as a great moral personality with personal powers and obligations. To the divine personality some inner eternal relationship might be considered essential. Such relationship is at least suggested by the knowledge of Fatherhood and Sonship made real and eternal by that same Spirit who is an indwelling power in men to make them sons of God by conformity to the image of his dear Son. There is mystery remaining, as in every conception of the absolute. But, if all mystery were cleared up, we should be thinking of something other than the absolute God. The knowledge of God as Father, Son, and Spirit, who are not three separate consciousnesses, wills, or individualities, but who together constitute by eternal coworking and

interrelation the one indivisible unity of God, enables us to think of God as having the conscious life of personal affection, of which our related life as individuals of the human organism may be considered an imperfect analogy. Lotze remarks that the personality of man is to be regarded as only a pale copy of the personality of God, meaning that the related multiform life of God is richer than that of man. Certain writers who have scant sympathy with Christianity conclude that, if a God exists, He must be a being who transcends the personality of man. May not the conception of Christianity be nearer the truth than speculations which lose the personality altogether, or regard it as essentially like our human personality with its limitations? The unity of God, as meaning that there is only one absolute and eternal God, is a primary truth; but the belief that the personality of the one God is realized as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is quite as reasonable as the belief that his personality is realized without any distinctions which are made known to us in

terms of relationship and coördination. It is not our purpose to consider the doctrine of the Trinity. It has been referred to only to indicate that the person of Christ considered as the incarnation of the eternal Word, and as the revelation of eternal Sonship, is in no conflict with belief in the unity and personality of God, but on the contrary may promote and even preserve such belief.

There is a limit to the understanding of the person of Christ. If he is truly divine, it could not be otherwise. The limit is on the side of speculative or metaphysical ideas of the mode of absolute being and manifestation. Nearly all confusion and perplexity concerning the person of Christ have been due to attempts to transcend the limits of understanding on that side. On the ethical side Jesus stands clearly revealed. The true law of life, the divine purity, righteousness, and love, the trust and obedience of sonship, the revelation of the fatherhood of God, are clear, warm, aglow with beauty and glory. We know it is the life of God which was manifested in

Christ, as we know it is the heaving of the ocean in all its fullness which rocks the frail barks resting on its surface. The attempt, reverently made, to penetrate the mystery of that life, as to the mode of its union with God, need not be discouraged, may even prove fruitful, especially as promoting a deeper reverence. But the life which was the light of men in its reality, its blessing, its life-giving power, is the gift of God for our good, and may be received as the gift of God to eternal life, whatever philosophical theory of the person is held, or indeed if no definite theory is held. Some of the ancient symbols are felt to be over-precise in statement as to essence, substance, nature, and equality. The metaphysics of the symbols is in part superseded by modern modes of thought, and in part also is needlessly minute. Their value is in the declaration that God was in Christ. They guarded the divineness of the revelation against doubts or denials of it. The Nicene Creed, in such phrases as "Light of Light," "very God of very God," means that it is God's own

truth and light which have come into this dark world in Jesus Christ. In him God seeks man, reversing the age-long weariness in which man was ever painfully seeking God.

The discussion, in the form it has thus far taken, would, however, by some, be considered incomplete without reference to the preëxistence of Jesus. Doubt on this point is regarded by some as fatal to belief in the divinity, while others who hold strongly to the divine nature of Christ, to his resurrection, and to his exaltation in heaven forever, cannot bring themselves to believe in his preëxistence, in the sense that when he was on earth he remembered a former life in heaven. That the identical being who was the historical Jesus was transferred unchanged from one world to another no one would think of believing. His body was a new existence by means of reproduction in the human species. He lived under limitations belonging not merely to the human, but also to the earthly life. Some transformation occurred when the Word became flesh, when the Son of God was

born of a woman, born under the law. If the successions of time can be applied to that which is eternal, to the being and life of God, so that a before and an after can be conceived, then it would have to be granted that, in the time of Abraham or of Moses, Jesus Christ, as he was known to the people of Galilee, did not exist. But he came forth from God. His very existence and being were divine. Under human conditions, and at a given time, he embodied the reality of a sonship which is eternal in the divine nature. That sonship, as we conceive, did not begin with the birth of the historical Jesus. The life of God is, it is true, above time. He is not confined to the succession of events, as if He lived now only in this period or day, and later will live only in that which follows. And if one insists on such carefulness of statement, it might be admitted that preëxistence, — or for the matter of that, post-existence, — should not be applied to the realities of the absolute, and even that it is enough to see in Jesus Christ the manifestation of the heart of God. In the same

way it might be admitted that Jesus did not come from some other place to the earth. For the heaven from which he came is not at a distance. It is the centre of the spiritual universe. It is at the sources of the divine life. Its light and heat need no time to travel to all the existences which have their being in God. To say that he came down from heaven merely means that he came from God, who is as truly and constantly on earth as in any other part of the universe. Yet the universe, which exists in space and is measured by distances, and which, as a universe, may have beginning and end, is a reality. And the history of men through the successive ages is a reality. God no doubt conceives them as we do not. But they are not illusions either to Him or to us, for they reveal Him to us. Jesus actually lived under these conditions of place and of time. To him there was before and after, here and there, as there is to us; and the question is whether to him when he was on earth, under human and historical conditions, there had

been a previous existence which he remembered, and of which his earthly life was in any real sense a continuation. If he was the Word incarnate, if the revealing principle in God and that which is eternal sonship in God were the sources of the human life which revealed them, then that which characterized him, and which shone through all his life, being of eternal and divine nature, preëxisted, so far as there can be any preëxistence. If Jesus revealed the very being of God as in the relation of fatherhood and sonship, then it would be absurd to suppose that the reality which Jesus revealed, and which made him what he was under human conditions, did not exist in the time of Moses and Abraham. The consciousness or recollection of Jesus in respect to the eternal conditions of sonship is another matter. But it may be observed that he was aware of a humiliation, a deprivation, a condescension, a contrast in his life among men, that he was aware of a life in the Father's love which in a sense he had relinquished, and to which he would return. He

knew that he came from a higher to a lower sphere, not, indeed, as one contrasts places, but rather as one contrasts states or conditions. To read this strain out of his sayings, as reported in the Fourth Gospel, and even in the other Gospels, is to remove an essential characteristic. This, in fact, has always given its power to the gospel, that Christ came from heaven to earth, from glory to dishonor, for us men and for our salvation, and that he was aware of his humiliation. The contrast implies a surprising difference of condition, and yet a real identity of personality. At the same time, as a human being pouring his life into his work for men, he was absorbed in the present rather than in the past. He was not dwelling in the past, nor living in it. And yet he was not oblivious of what may be called his past. Those strange, unaccountable impressions which arise at times in all minds, and which are called reminiscences, so weird and fugitive that they are by some referred to a preëxistent state, may suggest to us the reminiscences Christ may

have had of the higher, more glorious state from which he came. It is also to be remarked that there was a development of his knowledge, and that in the earlier years his consciousness of the glory of his eternal life may have been less clear than in later years, or even that in all his earthly life he was under limitations which may have kept his own mind from knowing all that was involved in his sonship with God. The chapter on the self-consciousness of Jesus may be referred to as confirming the opinion just presented.

Another question might be asked concerning the omnipresence of Christ since his exaltation. The presence of Christ in the world, in the church, in the heart, is a spiritual rather than a spatial presence. He rules over men in love and truth, not by physical contiguity, but by spiritual affinity. What was objectified in his earthly life is eternal in the relation of sonship, and is realized by the Spirit of God in all those spiritual aspirations which go forth towards Christ. All this is in the realm of character, the character of God revealed in

Christ touching and vitalizing the human spirit on the side of character through the energizing of the Spirit of God. That Spirit is the Holy Spirit. His agency is not a physical agency, but he takes the things of Christ and shows them unto us. In this sense Christ is omnipresent, but it is rather the omnipresence of affinity than of space. The physical world and the bodies of men are but the temporary conditions in which the spirit is localized while it responds to the spiritual forces which know nothing of distance, but flash from life to life instantly, as the lowly plant responds to the cosmic forces of light and heat and magnetism which pervade the universe.

We might go on to consider the development of Jesus, but it is not necessary. There was a real development, for he lived a real human life. It was the development of one personality throughout, a divine-human personality, not divine one day and human another, not divine when working a miracle, and human when wearied he sat on the well, but divine-human from first to last. As time passed he had a clearer recognition of his mission as

world-wide, and a deeper consciousness of his nature as the Son of God forever in the bosom of the Father, till with his resurrection and ascension he returned to the glory which he had with the Father from the foundation of the world. The narratives of the virgin birth are consonant with the preëxistence of the Logos and the development of a divine-human personality, though it is on his developed personality rather than on a miraculous origin that belief in his divinity depends.

In this discussion technical terms of theology and philosophy have been avoided, that the great spiritual truths of Fatherhood, Sonship, and redemption might stand out unencumbered as carrying self-evidence of the divinity of Christ. There are those who, in view of all the facts of nature and history, doubt, or even deny, the existence of any power or person other than the universe. But those opinions leave so much unexplained that agnosticism and materialism seem more childish than profound. To those who believe in a personal God and in the immortality of the human spirit, the revelation

of God's very nature as Father, Son, and Spirit, manifested to us in personal redemption and in the kingdom of Christ, which is a new humanity, is most reasonable. It reveals God, who otherwise might be known only as power rather than personality, as the God of love, eternally existing in the warmth of affection, and known to us in tenderness, in sympathy, in sacrifice, through which we learn to love God because He first loved us.

The belief in the divinity of Christ is as reasonable and as necessary now as it ever has been. The ideal of humanity is still far from being realized. The powers of evil are great. The law and the spirit of Christ are still the hope of the world. God in history and in humanity is not a God of the past, but of the present and the future, ever revealing himself in Jesus Christ, who is the same yesterday and to-day and forever. The entire truth is summed up in the phrase: "For the Life was manifested, and we have seen the Life, and bear witness, and declare unto you the Eternal Life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SATISFACTION OF HUMANITY IN JESUS CHRIST.

If we put beside the life of Paul the life of any one of his great contemporaries in the pagan world, we note a striking difference in our estimate of them. We naturally think of his contemporaries simply in their own personality; we cannot think of Paul without thinking more of Christ. The life of Seneca, for example, cannot be referred in any considerable degree to another person, only to the general civilization of which he was a part. The life of Paul is distinctly referable to Jesus Christ. No philosopher, or moralist, or religious devotee of Paul's time could have said, after the analogy of his memorable utterance, "That life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in (One) who loved me and gave himself up for me." There was

no sense in which it was true that the life of such a man was shared with or possessed by the life of another. But within Christianity the utterance of Paul became the familiar language of the growing fellowship, and at length one of the commonplaces of human experience. A constantly increasing proportion of the human race acknowledges, gratefully and joyfully, the fact that its life is not altogether its own, but that, like Paul's, it is distinctly referable in its new spiritual capacity to the indwelling life of Christ.

Jesus Christ has not imposed or enforced his life upon men. This fact is quite as significant as the fact of his possession of humanity. He has possessed no heart which he did not first satisfy. He continues to possess only because he satisfies. Satisfaction is the secret, as it is the measure, of the power of Jesus over the human heart. He renders satisfaction at points in respect to which it is otherwise impossible to obtain it, and that which he renders is absolute and complete.

Manifestly such a fact must have a bearing

upon our conception of the person of Christ. We must interpret Christ in part through that humanity of which he is so great a present factor, and in which he lives according to the conscious experience of so large a portion of the race. It would be as unscientific as it would be unnatural to ignore the fact in our interpretation of his person. We will try to apprehend with some definiteness the satisfaction of humanity in Jesus Christ, before we attempt to apply the fact to the present discussion of his divinity.

Jesus Christ has satisfied humanity in its desire to know God. Through him, and through him alone, we know that we know God. The certainty of our knowledge, in things spiritual as in things natural, is always worth more to us than the completeness of that knowledge. There is a sense in which the revelation of God in Jesus Christ is not complete, but we feel that it is sure, which is but saying that it is morally complete. Other disclosures concerning God await our entrance upon the larger realities of

our being, when once we take our place more intelligently in the universe, but of what God is to us here and now, and of what He must always be to us morally, we can no longer have a doubt. The revelation of God in Christ matches the whole ethical nature of man.

One evidence of this assertion, and at times a very impressive evidence, is the fact that the Christian revelation of God has put down that protesting element in human nature which always attends the false conception of God. The God whom we know through Jesus Christ commends himself to bad men as well as to good men. No man is able, under that revelation, to rise up in his sin and wickedness, and say, in any kind of self-justification, or with any consent whatever of his moral nature, I protest against God. God rules in the revelation of Jesus Christ with an absolute supremacy, because He rules there, not by the authority of might, but by the authority of a merciful righteousness.

Another evidence, not as impressive but

specially appreciable by our time, is the fact that the revelation of God in Christ is rectifying all other and minor beliefs, and bringing them into harmony with this which is central and supreme; revising those which went before, and revising with no less freedom those which have followed after. Perhaps no age of the church has been made more conscious of this rectifying power of the Christian revelation of God than our own age, certainly not because we are further in spirit from that revelation, but because, we think it may be fairly said, we are more sensitive to it. It is the Christian conception of God which is taking high precedence in all the religious thought of our time, which is informing its religious consciousness, which is reconstructing our systems of belief, which is compelling a larger and a more Christian interpretation of the doctrine of sacred Scripture. No one can altogether escape the power of this conception, not even those who persistently refuse its application to mooted points of Christian doctrine. It has, at least, brought about this

singular result in the case of those who are unwilling to thoroughly Christianize theology, that it has forced them for the most part to take refuge in the vagueness of extra-Christian conjectures or beliefs.

But the certainty that we know God through Christ has its more directly spiritual uses. It is the chief stimulus to faith. The desire to know God is not purely an intellectual desire. It is more than "the passionate curiosity which we feel before the mystery of the universe." It has in it the longing for companionship, the craving for communion. It belongs to the demand of the spiritual nature for life, for life in continuance and in fullness. So the soul instinctively turns to God, "whom to know is life eternal." It is knowledge in this sense which gives the communicating impulse to the thought of God. Whoever knows Him in the way of fellowship must strive to bring others into that relationship to Him. The intellectual knowledge of God may be held as a personal possession, but the spiritual knowledge of Him, the knowledge

which admits the daily intercourse, the freedom of communion, the walk with God, has in it the "woe is me if I preach not the gospel." It is this communicating impulse which runs with such gladness and urgency through the first Epistle of John. The whole epistle is conceived in the spirit of the opening words. "That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld and our hands handled concerning the word of life (and the life was manifested, and we have seen and bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested unto us), that which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us: yea, and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ; and these things we write that your joy may be fulfilled." Such is the satisfaction which Jesus Christ has brought into the world, and made possible to all men, and profoundly real to many, through his revelation of God.

But there is another form of satisfaction which he has rendered which is even deeper and more intense than this. Jesus Christ has satisfied humanity in the relief which he has brought to it under the consciousness of sin. There is really no experience which can compare in intensity with the experience of sin. The reality of sin is not to be confused with the experience of it. The reality is universal, the experience is unequal. Some know what sin is by its bitter fruits in their own souls and bodies, or in the souls and bodies of those yet dearer to them than their own; others know what sin is only in principle, through the selfishness which has some lodgment in every heart. Now, as the experience of sin is unequal, so the satisfaction which Christ brings to sinning men is unequal. And no one may argue from any knowledge which he may have of sin, short of the experience of it, how great that satisfaction is which Christ can render. For he who would satisfy humanity under the consciousness of sin must be able to meet it in its lowest conditions and in

its extreme possibilities. But the fact which bears its constant witness to the power of Christ is, that when the lowest conditions are reached, and the most extreme possibilities are realized, then the satisfaction is most complete. The saying of Paul is verified a thousand times with every day, "Where sin abounded grace did abound more exceedingly."

It is not to our present purpose to say how this result is brought about. If it were, it might not be possible. No theory is as wide as the fact. No philosophy of the atonement can altogether explain the process by which the sacrifice of Christ finds its sure result in purity and inward peace at the heart of a penitent and believing sinner. All that we can do is to watch the phenomena which attend the method of Jesus. We know that his approach to sin is through his own sinlessness. We can see that his purity wins its way where anything short of that would falter and fail. We know something of the power of his passion for sinners, — how irresistible at times it is,

working against the love of sin by "the expulsive power of a new affection." And we know that the method of Jesus is always sacrificial, in its deepest sense vicariously sacrificial, life for life, the cross the standard and the measure of the satisfaction which he imparts to a sinner. So much of the process we can see — and then the result.

There are two ways in which we can measure the impression which Christ has made upon the world as to his power over sin in the human heart. One is that which we have just been considering, in the case of those consciously delivered by him from its bondage, and consciously changed in the disposition and temper of their minds. The other appears as the painful opposite to this experience, in that false sense of security which the marvelous power of Christ has begotten in many minds, against which Christianity is obliged to put forth its constant and most serious warnings. The power of Christ seems so great and is so accessible that many presume upon it. Their presumption is their acknow-

ledgment of it. The false sense of security, which is the counterfeit of the true satisfaction of the soul in the actual relief from sin, is one proof of the genuineness of that satisfaction. If the saving power of Jesus Christ was not so evident, if it was not so constantly evidenced, some men at least would not dare to sin.

These are the two great matters of spiritual concern about which the heart of man demands satisfaction, — the sure knowledge of God, the conscious relief from sin. Jesus Christ has given at these points a satisfaction which is true and full.

But here comes in a new fact, which is of the greater significance because it is not precisely like those upon which we have been dwelling. As long as the human heart was unsatisfied, uncertain about God, unrelieved of the sense of sin, what could it do but expend all its energies in trying to gain some kind of satisfaction? What could the man do, who would know God, but "feel after him, if haply he might find him"? What could the man

do, oppressed with the sin of sin, but strive by penance and sacrifice to purge the guilt of his soul? As long as these great necessitous desires were unsatisfied, all other spiritual desires were held back and repressed, until at times it seemed as if they had no existence, as if the individual man cared only for a personal and selfish salvation. But when Christ satisfied these imperious desires, then all other spiritual desires were set free and sprang forth into newness of life. Nothing is more inspiring than to note the growth of those new desires which Christ called forth, and of which he took the leadership. Christianity meant at once, in idea, not simply the knowledge of God and the relief from the sense of sin, but a new society, new laws and customs, a new literature and life, another and a better world. The meaning of the new liberty was exemplified in Paul. Here was a man of essential greatness of nature, but dwarfed in his powers, and in danger of perishing in his narrowness. Christ met him and set him free, and instantly the freed and enlarged powers of his

nature went out to the saving of the world. It was the manifest intent of Christ that it should always be thus with his followers. He never intended that freedom should be an end in itself. He never intended that any soul should rest in the satisfaction which he had brought to it. The Christian was to be a new man, conscious of new and larger desires, and set to new and larger tasks.

Jesus Christ thus declares himself in respect to man by the twofold sign of power, — able to satisfy his deepest longings, and able also to lead forth into wide activity those latent desires of his spiritual nature which he has set at liberty. And it is evident that humanity responds to the spiritual leadership of Christ, as it acknowledges the satisfaction which it has found in him. One by one the great leaders of humanity have been taken up in the progress of the race, and absorbed in the volume of its better life. Jesus Christ has not been taken up and absorbed. His leadership is the constant and undiminished factor in human progress. The race gains

upon itself, but it makes no gain upon him. It has been sententiously said that "Christianity is always the best thing in the world." That may mean much or little. Christ does not share the varying fortune of Christianity. He is, as we know, "the same yesterday and to-day," and as we believe, "yea and forever."

We have thus far been considering a most singular and unique fact, which is inseparably connected in all its parts with a person. Here is one through whom men know God, and know that they know Him; through whom they are relieved of the burden of sin, and to whom they turn in the gratitude of their deliverance; and through whom they are able to rise in their freed powers into the new joy of sonship and go about the Father's business on earth. The fact is the most unique as it is the most glorious in human experience, and offers itself as an essential aid in our attempt to interpret the person of Jesus Christ. Happily for our generation, the chief approach to his person is not by the way of controversial or even speculative interest, but rather

by the way of interpretation. His personality comes before us, not as a metaphysical problem to be solved, but as an acknowledged reality to be apprehended and interpreted. The question which one serious-minded man puts to another is not, How do you explain Christ? but, How do you understand him? What does he mean to you? How do you place him in your own life and in the life of the world? The interpretation of a person, not the solution of a problem, represents the attitude of the religious mind toward Christ, and determines the method of our approach to his personality.

The fact before us, which must be considered as one of the sources of interpretation, necessitates some conclusion in regard to the person of Christ. To begin with the revelation which we have of God through him, — that revelation is so peculiar that it implies a peculiar relation on his part to God. Christ's revelation of God was that of a new relationship in the divine nature, namely, fatherhood. What guarantees to us that re-

lationship? How do we know that it is anything more than an idea, an analogy taken up out of earthly relations and carried back into the nature of God? To our mind, the guaranty of the absolute and essential fatherhood of God is the absolute and essential sonship of Jesus Christ. In this way the assurance is given, not in word, but in fact. When we say that men are the sons of God, we proclaim a comforting truth, but we do not thereby gain a better knowledge of what God is. We do not reach through the assumption of this relationship a sure and satisfying knowledge of God. To get a true idea of fatherhood we must have a true idea of sonship. That idea completely and perfectly realized, we know at once that there must be a corresponding idea of a complete and perfect fatherhood. The order of thought in the statement of John seems to us natural and rational, — "The only begotten which is in the bosom of the Father he hath declared him;" a statement which accords exactly with the utterance of Christ: "No man

knoweth the Father save the Son and he to whom the Son willeth to reveal him." The revealer of God the Father is naturally God the Son. The revelation must hold the quality and substance of the life revealed. The Nicene Creed was not written in the language of the nineteenth century, but we believe that it still utters a reasonable faith: "Light of Light, Very God of God." When a spiritual relationship has been established and has become familiar, we are apt to think that it is self-evident or easily discoverable. This thought finds constant exemplification in the conception of the divine fatherhood. We cannot think of God apart from it. But until the sonship of Christ made it evident, the world had never caught sight of it in any clear or sufficient sense. Earthly relations did not establish it, however much they may now appear to us to suggest it. And we are not at all sure that the conception would abide as a fixed reality if its original support should be withdrawn. Take away the fact of the absolute and essential sonship

of Christ, and, though we may not deny that fatherhood is inherent in the divine nature, yet we do not know how we can justify the belief to our certain consciousness. The sonship of Christ is the pledge of the fatherhood of God. It is difficult to see how we can accept the relationship, and refuse the guaranty which Christ offers in himself. Fatherhood and sonship have their abiding reality in the spiritual world because of the eternal correspondence revealed in the Father and the Son.

Passing now to the relation of Jesus Christ to the sin of the world, we find much in this relation which points to the same general estimate of his person. The method of Jesus, as we have seen, was sacrificial, ethical indeed, but not to the exclusion or subordination of the sacrificial. But when we begin to study the method of Jesus, we are startled to find that he reversed the whole course and current of sacrifice. The great volume of sacrifice had been pouring through innumerable channels from the heart of man into the heart of

God. Christ met and overwhelmed the sacrifices of men with the sacrifice of God. It was the inflowing tide of the ocean staying and returning the waters which were seeking its bosom. The act of Jesus was an act of sublime daring. We instinctively ask, Who is it that dares to make this reversal? Who is it that bids men cease their propitiatory rites? Who is it that puts out the fires on sacrificial altars, and stanches the blood of sacrificial victims? Who is it that carries out the change in and through his own person, and offers himself "the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world"?

If the change wrought out through the method of Jesus had been from the sacrificial to the ethical, it would not have been so astounding. If he had abolished not only the system, but the principle of sacrifice, we might say that his act represented a new stage in the divine administration of the world. But no, the principle was not abolished, it was rather acknowledged, accepted, and obeyed. It was ratified in suffering and death.

That the method of Jesus was sacrificial seems to us to be beyond dispute, the only question about it being this, Was it simply a part of the pain and suffering under which the whole creation groaneth and travaileth, or was it more distinctly God's part in the work of redemption? And this is really asking in respect to Jesus, Was his sacrifice voluntary or involuntary? What did he mean when he said of his life, "I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father"? Here again it seems to us natural and rational to interpret the sacrifice of Christ through his relation to the nature of God, and to think that in that relation lies the security of the Christian conception of sacrifice. Nothing less than the absolute assurance that the act of Jesus Christ in reversing the course of sacrifice was a divine act can avail to prevent a return of the race to the old course. No ethical provision can satisfy men in their sins. The correlative of sin is sacrifice. It is the sacrificial element which makes the ethics of

Jesus permanent and universal. Confucius may have anticipated some of the sayings of Jesus, but the words of Jesus have gone abroad in their saving power into all the earth. "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them," is another saying when interpreted in the light of the cross. The sacrifice of Jesus has transfigured all human duty. "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge that one died for all, therefore all died; and he died for all, that they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again."

The conclusion which we reach concerning the person of Christ, through the study of his sacrificial method, is sustained by the further inquiry into the ground of the assurance we have in his unfailing development of the race. Without doubt the trend of modern thought and faith is toward the more perfect identification of Christ with humanity. We cannot overestimate the advantage to Christianity of

this tendency. The world must know and feel the "humanity" of Jesus. But it makes the greatest difference in result whether the ground of the common humanity is in him or in us. To borrow the expressive language of Paul, was he "created" in us? or are we "created" in him? Grant the right of the affirmation that "there is no difference in kind between the divine and the human;" allow the interchange of terms, so that one may speak of "the humanity of God and the divinity of man;" appropriate the motive which lies in these attempts to bring God and man together, and thus to explain the personality of Jesus Christ, — it is still a matter of infinite concern to us whether his home is in the higher or lower regions of divinity. After all, very little is gained by the transfer of terms. Humanity is in no way satisfied with its degree of divinity. We are still as anxious as ever to rise above ourselves. And in this anxiety we want to know concerning our great helper whether he has in himself anything more than the possible increase of a common

humanity. What is his power to lift, and how long may it last? Shall we ever reach his level, attain to his measure, become as divine as he, or does he have part in the absolute and infinite? This question may seem remote in result, but it is everything in principle. The immanence of Christ has its present meaning and value because of his transcendence. "Our fortunes — shall I say it?" — we borrow the words of Dr. Dale in his "Lectures on the Ephesians," — "were identified with the fortunes of Christ. In the divine thought and purpose we were inseparable from him. Had we been true and loyal to the divine idea, the energy of Christ's righteousness would have drawn us upward to height after height of goodness and joy, until we ascended from this earthly life to the larger powers and loftier services and richer delights of other and diviner worlds; and still, through one golden age of intellectual and ethical and spiritual growth after another, we should have continued to rise towards Christ's transcendent and infinite perfection. But we

sinned; and as the union between Christ and us could not be broken without the final and irrevocable defeat of the divine purpose, as separation from Christ meant for us eternal death, Christ was drawn down from the serene heavens to the shame and sorrow of the confused and troubled life of our race, to pain, to temptation, to anguish, to the cross, and to the grave, and so the mystery of his atonement for our sin was consummated." Such an identification of the race with Jesus Christ not only declares the meaning of the Incarnation and the Atonement, but sets forth the ground of that hope for the race, which is cherished by the Christian heart, that humanity will yet find its full perfection in the human — because the divine — Christ.

In concluding this discussion of the satisfaction of humanity in Jesus Christ, the question reverts for the moment to his own consciousness in respect to himself and his work. Did he anticipate such a result? Was he conscious of that within himself which must have its correspondence in the return of the human

heart to him in confidence and trust? The answer to this question is found in the recorded meditation of Jesus, among the most unquestioned of his words, in which, as he contemplates his union with the Father, he contemplates also the meaning of it to the wearied and troubled soul of man. The spirit of prayer passes into that of invitation as he communes with his own heart, and he anticipates in his own soul the utterance of that compassion which was to break from his lips.

"At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.

"All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him.

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are

heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

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Smyth, E. C.

The divinity of Jesus Christ.

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